■ BUSINESS/B1
First Pacific offers to buy 40% of Del Monte for $163M

ABS-CBN profit down 9% in 3rd quarter

■ WORLD/A10
3 hotels in Jordan bombed; 57 killed, 110 hurt

■ NEWS/A2
Purge of lawmakers who voted for GMA impeachment starts

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

New gov't rules on dual citizenship elate Fil-Ams
By TJ Burgonio

THOUGH "UPSET" ABOUT THE LINGERING political crisis back home, Filipino Americans are acting to go back to the Philippines, renew their vows and touch base with relatives.

New mixed marriages also will www.a2

Black & White Movement red-faced over porn website
By Christine Avendaño and Jamie Marcos

Friday, November 11, 2005 ▲ 24 pages | vol. 29 | no. 336 www.inquirer.net

GMA to media: Focus on winners, not losers

Combative speech delivered before top broadcast execs

THE BIG BAD NEWS Ease on, President Arroyo tells the Kapisanan ng mga Brodkaster ng Pilipinas in Baguio during its management conference. Report only her success in balancing the country's debts instead of covering "kangaroo courts, lynch mobs and witch-hunts."

By the PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

BAGUIO CITY—President Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday maintained her fighting stance and urged the broadcast industry to shift its coverage from "kangaroo courts" run by "issuers" to her success in balancing the country's debts.

Her combative tirade matching her red suit, Ms Arroyo told the media should start doubling "as bad boy image" by practicing "impartial, Mr Philippine journalism" and by refusing to be used by "the political enemies in supposed campaigns against her administration."

"I appeal as you are to be used sometimes or provided as a pawn in political games, pawns as decent... heroes," she told the Kapisanan ng mga Brodkaster ng Pilipinas' 51st broadcast management conference.

The President arrived by air plane at Camp John Hay en route late for her scheduled 9 a.m. speech and left before noon.

NEWS A4

President not sorry for leaking Babao story

By Nicozar Cabreza
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

BAGUIO CITY—PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo does not regret leaking the identity of the broadcast journalist alleged by the military to have helped hold out rebel suspect

In a speech yesterday at the 51st top level management conference of the Kapisanan ng mga Brodkaster ng Pilipinas, Ms Arroyo defended her action and, by good measure, took a swipe at the "unruly members" media... (Stop Babao story at right.)

But in her main speech, dubbed as Lopez III, chair of the ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp., called on the government to stop "haranguing the image" of media without proof.

"I have been heavily criticized for disclosing a report that a broadcast journalist was influential in bringing out a terrorist," the President said, adding:

"Terrorism is evil and I consider any fight against terror as a duty of my presidency ... which you and I must take seriously.

"I am disappointed when the press is overly sensitive over its prerogatives, when at the same time many of our journalists ... will fan news of anybody's arrest without circumstantial evidence."

The President said the country should "take heed of the media becoming part of the rumor-mill, broadcasting and blasting dissenting opinion over those being an in-

PRESIDENT A4

'VFA doesn't require Marines' detention in RP'

By Yuji Zamoranos

THE US EMBASSY SAID YESTERDAY there was nothing in the Visiting Forces Agreement that called on the United States to detain in the Philippines the American servicemen accused of raping a Filipina so as long as they would appear when needed in the case against them.

Embassy spokesperson Matthew Lussenhop said he shared the view expressed by Foreign Undersecretary Jovito Salonga that the VFA did not specify that US servicemen accused of criminal offenses in the country should be kept in prison. Besides and what was expected was for them not to jeopardize the case being filed against them.

"There's no provision on that. Nothing in it says they remain in the country," said Lussenhop when the EMBASSY sought his comments on Pasedes' remarks made on Wednesday.

Lussenhop denied that a request had been made to Philippine officials to allow the six servicemen to leave the country for their home base in Okinawa, Japan.

"That's absolutely not true," he said.

On Wednesday, an official of the Bahay ng Alumni sa Pasedes Association, said that the Americans had landed on Pasedes' grounds in the second servicemen in their mother unit.

FULL STORY A4

Angie Reyes: Don't judge cops based on video

By Norman Bordadora and Luige B. del Puerto

INTERIOR SECRETARY ANGELO Reyes is confident police killed Dante Tan themselves, not the innocent victims of wealthy families to cover up embarrassment in his sweeping investigation.

Reyes said allegations of extortion related from the video taken by rumors UNTV of the latter moments of the police operation when a policeman was seen firing on the blindfolded man in the most shocking way he began shooting.

"You cannot judge based on the video alone. You wouldn't know the circumstances on the ground. The police, they were there," Reyes said.

Brian Anthony Daley, one of the three killed during the shootout on Daniel Street at the Philippine Center in Pasig City on Monday, was accused of car theft in 1999 in the Makati Regional Trial Court but the complaint was subsequently withdrawn, Reyes said yesterday.

Also yesterday, a 49-year-old man came forward and told police that Daley was the man who took his Toyota Pajero of passport at 12:30 a.m. on Oct. 2 near the Podium or the Ortigas Center.

Another suspect gunned down, Jaime Cu Unjieng, was identified as the fiancé of Angel Jolie who was arrested

ANGELO REYES A4

MAGNIFICENT The National Museum's botany division discovers a "critically" endangered flower which has the world's largest bloom in an undisturbed swamp in Mariquina, Compostela Valley.

World's largest bloom

By Charles E. Ballaz

AN EXTREMELY STRONG OF RAFFLE-sia, a rare flower known for having the world's largest bloom, has been set up as a botanical conquest in Valley in Mindanao.

This was confirmed by a team of botanists headed by Dr. Domingo Madulid, a curator at the National Museum's botany division.

Madulid prepared the name Rafflesia magnifica for the newly discovered species.

He said a scientific paper had been submitted to Blumea, a Netherlands-based journal on plant taxonomy and plant geography, which verifies and officially recognizes the discovery of new plant species.

"The team's discovery of such a rare and critically endangered flower in the municipality of Mainganon shows the critical need to preserve the area," Madulid said.

He asked the tourists not to invade the

WORLD'S LARGEST A4

HIT WITH a crowbar, Greenpeace volunteer Jose Lorena is knocked out; a skirmish in Pasada Police rushes to his aide.

German Greenpeace member beaten up by coal plant guards

MASBATE, ZAMBALES—A GERman volunteer for Greenpeace was badly beaten by armed guards yesterday during a demonstration against global warming at the Masinloc coal-fired power plant in Zambales, according to Philippine-based group.

The protest at the state-run Masinloc coal plant turned violent when a group of 26 Greenpeace activists entered the compound at about 8 a.m. to display a banner reading "Stop climate change."

National Power Corp., which operates the 600-megawatt coal plant, said it had always been willing to sit down and dialogue

GERMAN GREENPEACE A4

GREENPEACE environmentalists barge into the coal-fired Masinloc power plant in Zambales.

WEATHER FORECAST

Second FRONTPAGE

Purge of pro-impeach solons starts

By Michael Lim Ubac

SIGNALING THE START OF A POST-IMPEACHment purge of critics of President Macapagal Arroyo, the ruling coalition in the House of Representatives late Wednesday removed Rep. Rolilo Golez (Parañaque) as chair of the committee on defense and national security.

Rep. Jose Solis (Kampi, Sorsogon), in a brief speech in support of ousting the impeachment complaints against the President, was elected to replace Golez.

Solis, who called for the resignation of the lawyer, voluntarily gave up the committee chairmanship at the height of the congressional inquiry into the wiretapped conversations between Ms Arroyo and former election commissioner Virgilio Garcillano in which the two were alleged to be conspiring to fix the vote in 2004.

The defense committee was one of the five House committees that investigated the so-called "Hello Garci" tapes.

Rep. Gilbert Remolla (SB Cebu), chair of the committee on public information which led the inquiry, is also set to be replaced by Rep. Rodolfo Antonino (Kampi, Iloilo 5th).

The latest of a post-impeach-ment House reorganization became necessary as lawmakers that Speaker Jose de Venecia is not positioned himself having a challenger to his leadership from within the ruling Lakas-CMD.

Sorsogon del Sur Rep. Reuben Pichay threatened to wrest the speakership from De Venecia if the latter failed to institute "reforms" in the chamber in the next two weeks.

De Venecia yesterday said the "post-impeachment jockeying for power" was causing his control.

He said he had strengthened his grip on the House leadership after winning an "overwhelming vote of confidence when members issued party lines to vote down a motion to declare all seats in the chamber vacant."

The vote, taken after the roll call with 160 members present, resulted in opposition bid to replace the entire leadership after a motion to declare all seats vacant was defeated, 91-12.

"There is no reorganizing when this vote more, Speaker De Venecia remains without any serious challenge, and this is a vote for continuing unity on agenda of economic and political reforms to unleash the country's potential," said Rep. Robert Jaworski Gabbi, Batangas 2nd Dist.).

The House reorganization was off to a bad start when the primary elected Solis despite the absence of a quorum, prompting a protest from Rep. Abraham Kahlil Mitra (1st District).

A member of the administration coalition, Mitra questioned the haste with which Solis was "elected as committee chair."

But Deputy Speaker Raul del Mar, the presiding officer, ruled that the election of House officers was not subject to a vote.

House Majority Leader Prospero Nograles explained in response that the election of standing committee chairs was a "prerogative of the leadership."

"When the majority leader nominates a chairman, it's not subject to a vote or division of the House. Election is final and cannot be questioned," said Nograles.

Mitra said the logical choice to replace Golez should be his party mate Montenegro Rep. Romeo Jalosjos (Zamboanga Sibugay), who are both vice chairs of the defense committee.

To attack Nograles countered: "It be illegitimate still to question of [his] administration." "We can't allow [anti-administration congressmen] to run this House committee."

Various ruling coalition members are vying for five committee chairmanships and the post of deputy speaker for Luzon, sources in the House have said. Among the 11 House members who voted to impeach the President on Sept. 6.

Only 1 of 8 terror suspects enters plea

By Tarra V. Quismundo

THE FIRST HEARING OF THE rebellion case the justice department filed last week against seven terror suspects ended with a not guilty plea and seven opposite lodged.

Only one of the eight detained suspects tagged as members of the Indonesian Abu Sayyaf terror group and the accused in January's regional terrorist network was arraigned in a Makati court yesterday, after his fellow detainees asked the court to reconsider their indictment on non-bailable charges of rebellion.

In the sala of Makati Regional Trial Court (RTC) Judge Encarnacion Reyes, Mohk Abdurahim, the only suspect to have private lawyers, entered a plea of not guilty to the rebellion charges.

After he was read the charges in Filipino, Abdurahim with the assistance of his counsel, Raymund Fortun, entered a not guilty plea.

The court, meanwhile, deferred the proceedings for the seven others, after Ramonedjo Gramjo, their assigned counsel from the Public Attorney's Office, appealed. Mayo's order finding probable cause in the rebellion case filed by the Department of Justice.

Gramjo represents Hilarion Santos, alleged Rajah Sulaiman Movement (RSM) member, one of the latter's wives Hamida Ibrahim, Nasrudjie Amdal, Mustafa Bakao, Ismael Idris, Amin Imarat and Rufel Abdulla.

Along with Abdurahim, the seven on the demand of the fourth prosecutor of the Armed Forces (AFP) headquarters in Camp Aguinaldo, Quezon City.

"There was no preliminary investigation conducted. After I spoke with my clients, they said they only came to know just now about the rebellion charges they faced... This is to avoid the hasty and malicious prosecution of the accused," said Gramjo.

Gramjo told the court he would file a motion for reconsideration to seek the court's review of the criminal information lodged against his clients.

Mayo scheduled the hearing on Gramjo's motion for Nov. 18, and tentatively reset the arraignment of the seven accused to Dec. 20.

Hyde prosecutors, meanwhile, said the motion was irrelevant, although they said the detainees were informed of their criminal liability during inquest proceedings at Camp Aguinaldo.

"During inquest, it's normal for the accused to have no lawyers, because it's just our fault that when they were arrested they did not have lawyers," said Senior State Prosecutor Emmanuel Velasco.

At least 13 others facing terrorist charges remain at large, including Abu Sayyaf leaders Khaddafy Janjalani and Jainal Asbi, also the Sulaimans, and Santos's younger brother, Tarose Jamil Santos, better known as Dawud.

The younger Santos was present during the hearing but stayed at the back. His lawyer had filed a separate motion for the court to determine whether he and his sister-in-law, Ramona Santos, were properly indicted

FG's farm workers decry nonpayment of salaries

CLAIMING THEY HAD NOT been receiving the minimum wage or holiday pay for the past three years, 24 farm laborers of Hijo Corporation, Inc. in Tagum City, Davao del Norte, filed a complaint with the regional office of the Department of Labor and Employment.

"Mayo ang mga nagpapagod at ang mga hindi binabayaran ng tamang sahod at overtime pay," said Ronald Gregorio, chair of the Hacienda Banana Farmers Beneficiaries Association and an official of the national peasant federation Unyon Pesante Magsasaka.

He said the 157 farmers supervision with a total of 69 fam workers were classified as a "piecework wage system" and should therefore provide its workers a daily minimum wage of P320 as ordained by the Tripartite Regional Wages and Productivity Board for June 16.

"We are only paid a salary for six months of the year. If you compute it, our annual salary is only P11,000. This means that we cannot even have a budget of P30 a day for the needs of our families. Who would survive on P30?" Gregorio said.

The farmers were one of several Davao beneficiaries protested Monday and vow promised to give up to the agrarian reform program in 2001.

Arroyo facing

MESSAGES

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REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVES

Concom to hold nationwide poll on cutting GMA's term

By Cliff C. Calleseraga Jr.

THE CONSTITUTIONAL COMMISSION WILL HOLD a nationwide poll to find the public pulse on whether cutting short President Macapagal-Arroyo's term of office should be written into the transitory provisions of the amended Constitution.

Concom Deputy Secretary General Romeo Bongcac said the body would conduct a final round of consultations nationwide before it tackles the final part of its job which is to determine how to phase in the changes in the Constitution.

"We will ask leaders and representatives to all sectors whether the transitory provisions should include cutting some other President," said Bongcac.

The question of whether the President should serve only part of her current six-year term has been known for the last working point in the Charter change debate process.

A number of political leaders are for shortening of the President's term in the so-called Bill One but fail to unite to finally resolve the political crisis brought on by doubts about whether she had won the 2004 polls.

Bongcac said the Concom has made the transitory provisions the "end-game" agenda in anticipation of the transmittals earlier to one of the Presidential bills.

This is the reason the Concom has decided not to entertain any petitions on the effect of constitutional reforms on the length of the President's continued stay in office in the ongoing consultations that has taken the body to key cities and provinces in the Visayas and Mindanao.

Bongcac said the body wanted to settle first three key reform issues in the Constitution—whether to retain the presidential or shift to a parliamentary system, maintain a unicameral or bicameral congress or revert to a federal structure, and keep the citizenship requirement or lift also restrictions on ownership.

By Tue, the Concom's consultations have shown that a divided majority want a parliamentary and federal system, but the public's position on the lifting of foreign ownership restrictions have been mixed.

Bongcac said the Concom would make the second round of consultations a week or two before the Dec. 15 deadline for it to submit its final list of recommended amendments to Malacañang.

Quezon folk's evacuation urged

DISASTER OFFICIALS YESTERDAY URGED Quezon provincial officials to evacuate residents of low-lying areas ahead of tropical storm "Unding."

Maj. Gen. Glen Rabonza (ret.), administrator of the Office of Civil Defense, said the OCD had relief supplies and relief equipment in place in the towns of Real, Infanta and General Nakar in northeastern Quezon.

The towns were among those hit by massive landslides last December when some 1,000 people were killed. In a video conference of Camp Aguinaldo yesterday, Rabonza said provincial officials were given the discretion to order evacuation of low-lying areas.

"Contingency plans are in place. We are asking them to take preventive measures so we can relieve some casualties," he said.

Tropical storm "Unding" was spotted by the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration off the coast of Casiguran, Aurora, with maximum sustained winds of 55 kph near the center and gustiness of up to 100 kph. It is forecast to move west-northwest at 24 kph.

Signal number 1 has been raised over Casiguran, Aurora, Kalinga, Abra, Mountain Province, the Ilocos provinces, La Union, Benguet, Pangasinan, Tarlac, Pampanga, Zambales, Bataan, Cavite, Metro Manila, the rest of Quezon, Rizal and Metro Manila. These areas are expected to experience winds of 30-60 kph.

Bruce S. Flamiano and Norman Bordadora

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Militants: OFWs, not VAT, to thank for strong peso

By DJ Yap

THANK FILIPINOS WORKING OVERSEAS for the strong peso, not the expanded value-added tax.

Militants yesterday scoffed at a suggestion from experts that raising the VAT rate to 12 percent in January would spur the peso to a three-month rally.

"The peso is appreciating because Government to the usual tune where OFW remittances flow in," said Francisco Nemenzo, chair of the Lilimi ng Mass militant group and a former president of the University of the Philippines.

"The VAT has nothing to do with it," he said.

As they held simultaneous talks in parts of Metro Manila and other cities nationwide to call for the scrapping of the VAT, the militants slammed the "wisdom" prediction by experts that a 12-percent VAT next year would result in a halt to the peso and the stock market.

Jose Ibarra, treasurer of Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank, and Wilson Ilo, a former chair of the Philippine Stock Exchange, suggested the other day that raising the VAT rate in January would boost investor confidence and result in a bullish run in the financial markets.

"They are experts in their trade of speculation but not in addressing the real solution to the economic crisis," Nemenzo said in a statement.

Lilimi ng Mass said its economists have argued that imposing a consumption tax like the VAT would have direct inflationary effects on the economy, with the poor bearing the brunt of price increases.

They said this would have no direct effect on the currency exchange rate and that the predictions of financial experts are mere speculation and only based on presumed "human confidence."

Trading in the financial markets is up because investors take their cue from the International Monetary Fund which has long lobbied the government to impose the expanded VAT, the economists are supposed to have said.

Lilimi ng Mass said the temperature of the expanded VAT was a "political signal" to creditors rather than a remedy to the chronic economic problems of the country.

"Should there be bullish trading in the financial markets, this is only temporary because GMA (President Macapagal-Arroyo) has not really gotten over her crisis of political survival. Financial investors are aware of this and they could easily pull out anytime there is a negative political signal," said Wilson Ilo, a native of Surallah.

UP Law alumni fete set

THE UNIVERSITY OF the Philippines Law Alumni Association is holding its annual alumni homecoming on Nov. 18 at 6 p.m. at the SEC Tent, Bonifacio Global City.

With the theme "A Celebration of Life and Friendship," the event is hosted by this year's silver jubilarians, the UP Law '80 Foundation.

Foundation president Raoul Sojuangco said, "The event promises to be a gathering of the most prominent legal eagles of our time."

Ticket inquiries may be made with Daisy Tiven at tel. 818-9500, Helen Bengil at 897-2138, or the class representatives.

Warmest Congratulations to
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Paying Estrada's way form of bribery, says prosecutor

MEMBERS OF ATENEO HIGH SCHOOL Class of 1955 would be committing the crime of bribery if they pay for the cost of transportation donated to President Joseph Estrada to the Metalica Theater to attend a concert to mark the stars' golden jubilee, Special Prosecutor Dennis Villa-Ignacio warned yesterday.

The Sandiganbayan Special Division is hearing a petition from Estrada lawyer Rene Saguisag to allow the deposed leader to attend the class reunion.

One of Estrada's classmates opposed before the court on Wednesday to support Saguisag's motion and offered to shoulder the expense, estimated at P500,000, of transporting Estrada from his Tanay estate where he is under detention to the Metalica Theater in Ortigas Ave. in Pasig City.

In his comment on the petition, Villa-Ignacio told the court yesterday that Estrada's classmate and property owner that "to accept the offer of assisted Estrada's classmates would be tantamount to committing the crime of bribery."

"Whatever amount that might be offered by accused Estrada's classmates is evident to defray his expenses in secure his safety in coming to Manila on Nov. 15, 2005, can be construed as a consideration to obtain a favorable resolution of the motion," Villa-Ignacio said.

He said the original court's special division should deny Saguisag's motion for "lack of merit."

Villa-Ignacio argued that to grant Estrada's motion would violate the equal protection clause of the Constitution.

He said that despite the privilege accorded a former chief of state, Estrada was "still a detention prisoner that should not be treated differently from other detention prisoners."

He also noted that Estrada could not be considered a member of famous High School Class of 1955 since he was expelled from the station and did not finish his secondary studies there.

"In sum, Estrada would only be a guest of the Ateneo High School Class of 1955," he said.

Mikael Ellorin

Loren's protest delayed again

THE SUPREME COURT HAS POSTPONED anew the recount of votes for the 2004 vice presidential election in order to act on a pending motion of former Sen. Loren Legarda to exclude the votes from Lanao del Norte and Surigao del Sur from her election protest against Vice President Noli de Castro.

The recount of votes for Lanao del Sur was supposed to have started yesterday but the high court acting as the Presidential Electoral Tribunal (PET), said it has yet to act on her motion.

The PET originally set the recount of votes for Lanao del Sur on Oct. 18 but postponed it to Nov. 11.

Last week, Legarda filed a motion asking the PET to allow her to withdraw the two Mindanao provinces from her protest and instead use the undisputed votes in the two provinces to offset the recount of the votes in Cebu. De Castro won over Legarda by 900,000 votes in Cebu.

In the motion, Legarda said, she hoped to facilitate the recount of the votes in Cebu, where all legal matters (counting took place, and were in De Castro's unfavorable favor of 900,000.

She also lamented the slow pace of the recount.

"Admittedly, I was saddened that the recount, which should have started yesterday covering the province of Lanao del Sur, had been postponed anew," Legarda said.

"But I have complete faith that the Supreme Court would finally get the recount going so that the Filipino people may once and for all know who really won the vice presidential election last year," she said.

Legarda blamed De Castro for delaying the case proceedings. She pointed out her protest had been pending for a year and a half. She asked the PET to speed up the process.

Cynthia D. Rodeno

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Friday, November 11, 2005
Saint Mark in Ordinary Time
1st Reading: Wis 13:1-9
Seagull: Luke 17:26-37

Jesus said to his disciples, "As it was in the days of Noah, so will it be on the day the Son of Man comes. They people ate and drank, they took husbands and wives. But on the day Noah entered the ark, the flood came and destroyed them all. Just as it was in the days of Lot: people ate and drank, they bought and sold, planted and built. But on the day Lot left Sodom, God made fire and sulfur rain down from heaven which destroyed them all. So will it be on the day the Son of Man is revealed.

"On that day, if you are on the rooftop, don't go down into the house to get your belongings, and if you happen to be in the fields, do not turn back. Remember Lot's wife. Whoever tries to save his life will lose himself, but whoever gives his life will be given again.

"I tell you, that night two men are sleeping the same bed; it may be that one will be taken and the other left. Though two women are grinding corn together, one may be taken and the other left."

Then they asked Jesus, "Where will this take place, Lord?" And he answered, "Where the body is, there too will the vultures gather."

Commentary:

Jesus speaks much more clearly, pushing his disciples to recognize the seriousness of what he is saying, comparing the days ahead to those of Noah or he made the ark or those around him mocked him and the flood came. And again, Sodom is presented with its sins of lust. The Son of Man will come in judgment and we must see to get ready with him. Indeed we must give our life now and everyday and make ready before it's the Word can you like. But we do not know the time, any of us. What we know is that we must live each day and be baptized and that continue in that way of the wise all our days. Like Martin who left the military to be baptized and then became a hermit, a monk, a bishop and someone who tirelessly defended heretics and suffered for promoting them, we must change again and again, radically as we come to see people in need of our love and service.

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GMA to media: Focus on winners, not losers

Presidential Spokesperson Ignacio Bunye said Arroyo was not referring to any specific media outfit when she criticized the "negativism" of the press.

Bunye said Arroyo was just "reminding the newscasters of people, like the business community."

"I think she has every right to criticize the media and express her sentiments, as we are doing," he said, adding that the media should "never construe (the Palace) statements as a threat to press freedom."

Gabriel Claudio, the Arroyo's political adviser, said the media should take "her gripe for what it is: A fresh and honest expression of frustration over this country's inherent negativism but maintains a subconscious harmony and the improvement of our national image abroad because of the propensity of some sectors of the media to magnify or be fixated on negative occurrences and incidents instead of projecting the good things happening in the country."

In the EDSA rendezvous, Deputy Presidential Spokesperson Lopez Ili, chief of the MIS-CIDS Broadcasting Corp., said there were points where the opposition chief needed to be reviewed.

He said that because it had become "easy" to resign from the EDSA and be "beyond the reach of its self-regulatory code," the organization's regulation function was now "free" and it is entrance open to challenges.

However, Lopez said, the EDSA decision to withdraw its membership in the Advertising Board showed its resolve to adopt reforms in order to function independently of other institutions.

Blocked protesters

"The main thing our main loyalty should be to the Filipino people. They are our audience—whose needs, whose wants, whose wishes have, should be our supreme concern. They need to see to help them decide the playing field not just with government businesses but (also with) other parts of society," he said.

Earlier yesterday, Bunye spoke before a session of the Presidential Security Group Inaugural Command Conference at the Malacañang Golf Course, Malacañang Park.

Meanwhile, Bunye said he was informed that the Philippine National Police (PNP) had blocked protesters from marching to the Malacañang Golf Course.

He said the protesters were supposed to march to the golf course to express their opposition to the proposed Charter change.

"I was informed that the PNP blocked the protesters from marching to the golf course," he said.

Bunye

SPORTS
E-mail sr_sports@inquirer.com.ph
Editor Teddyboy S. Melendres

Harbour Centre rips FEI, gains tie for No.1

By Marc Anthony Reyes

DIMINUTIVE ROOKIE MARCY Arellano hit 10 of his 16 points in the fourth quarter to lead Harbour Centre to an 87-78 victory over Far Eastern Insurance yesterday and a share of the lead in the PBL Heroes Cup at the JCSGO Gym in Cubao.

The 5-foot-10 University of the East point guard made sure the Insurers won't be able to come back in the playoff period as the five Maestros notched their second straight win.

Harbour Centre joined rally Magnolia at the top while the Insurers suffered their second loss in seven.

The Granny Goose Textiles earlier welcomed coach Joe Lipa with a resounding 74-50 win over Montalla Weterbop behind Jeri Lacsina and Toni Almeda.

The Textiles improved to 3-1 while Montalla fell to 1-3.

The Pure Maestros also got inspired performances from Joseph Yeo and Edwin dela Pe-ña, who scored 12 markers.

MARKSMAN AT

MARKSMAN Corona's Marcy Arellano talks on the slippery floor but still manages to pass off Mark Yee of Far Eastern Insurance. ANGGUTAN DIAZ

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PETRON

Black & White Movement red-faced …

Turn to page A-5

…tured, a group calling for the nonviolent ouster of President Macapagal-Arroyo, are finding out that they are getting more than they bargained for in the group's website.

Clicking upon blackandwhite.com, the website address of the movement is continued to the full-page ad published in newspaper dailies, the order they see is switched to a provoking road, or in Binconsin, show.

The address leads to a pay-for-porn site featuring pornsexual site, far from what the movement had in mind.

"This is an adult site which contains naughty XXX sexually explicit entertainment," the website boasted.

Lapse in judgment

"An honest mistake and a lapse in judgment" was how group convenor Vic "Ramong" Romano III explained the mishap.

Romano said those who pressed the newspaper ad had written down the wrong address in this case the porn site.

He said the actual website of the movement was blackandwhite.movement.com.

Sabotage?

The group pressed on ad inviting people to join the group in its quest to restore the political status as well as a planned "Gabi ng Kabansahan" on Dec. 30, Bonifacio Day.

It was Romano himself who explained the name of the movement's website. He said he had wanted the website address to be blackandwhite.com but found out that it had been "taken" and was actually a porn site.

Since the ads' publication on Wednesday, Romano said that he received fervent messages and calls from friends informing him that the group was hacked to oppression.

"They wanted to know the current website and cast some unkind remarks—the group has been sabotaged," Romano said.

He insisted that what happened was "purely accidental."

Equally shocked at this development were the objects of the movement's disaffection—Malacañang officials.

Press Secretary Ignacio Bunyo acknowledged that some members of the Cabinet had alerted him to the shocking website.

While Bunyo said he had not visited the site, he assailed the movement's "indecent and immoral attempt at corrupting Filipino morals."

Told that the group already explained that it was an honest mistake, Bunyo noted: "Well, in their technical limits, they committed the mistake."

Disclaimer

The disclaimer on the same page of the controversial ad said all the while the usual warning that only people aged 18 and up could view the website, it has exposed first-people who were offended by "nudity, images, and artwork, pics of naked women, XXX pics of girls showing their … and black men showing their … and sex between the abominations" would do well not to enter.

While most of the viewers is off-limits without a credit card number, the introduction and registration pages featured excerpts of the movement and other explicit text content.

The site also has its own automated tour guide. "Eh, Utoper!" a blonde, gum-popped woman with a British accent who calls herself "the world's foremost expert on international curses" tells the website surfer to be his guest "in a guided tour of cadaddily and blackmoving."

Once in a while

Informed that Malacañang was shocked by the website, Romano couldn't help but add: "At least once in a while they would get shocked."

Other convenors of the Black & White Movement are Sen Loprisi, Louis Biraogo, Gerry Ramos, Bill Luz, Oscar Lagman, Ronnie Tolledo, Nito Donato Diokno and Jerry Bellaluz, Joaquin Sison and Trevor Sison.

The movement is calling for a nationwide signature campaign for the resignation/removal from office of Mr. Arroyo, whom it accused of rigging last year's presidential election. The President has denied any wrongdoing.

Whether she elected or not is no longer the only issue. The question is whether she could remain in Malacañang without the support of the people," the Black & White Movement said in its ad.

The group wants Vice President Noli de Castro to take over as President and "to call a special election in 2007 after a revamp of the Commission on Elections.

If the Vice President is unwilling to take over the presidency, the group urges Anti-Imelda Pro-Cory Imelda Ferdinand Bolitoe call for special elections, according to The group.

MORE AND MORE FILIPINOS ARE SAYING GOODBYE TO HAIR LOSS— THANKS TO NU/HART

0% INTEREST

NU/HART HAIR SCIENCE

6-38-6000

New gov't rules on dual citizenship elate Fil-Ams

Turn to page A-5

…rewards the way for the Filipino homecoming drama.

"Thanks to this new requirement, most people like myself can start thinking to come back to the Philippines," Old Saved Linda Nicolas Lewis told reporters at the Senate session.

Thanking Drilon

Lewis, together with Undersecretary Jose Molano Jr. of the Commission on Filipinos Overseas, called on Senate President Franklin Drilon to thank him for pushing the Bureau of Immigration to re-add the t-date.

On May 1, the Bureau of Immigration issued a circular requiring Filipino-American to namely present old passports, birth certificates, voter's affidavits or marriage contracts, or any document to prove that they were born in the Philippines when acquiring for citizenship.

Old rules

It was a complete departure from the old rules that required applicants to present both certificates authenticated by the National Statistics Office, a process which the Filipinos-Americans found tedious.

Filipinos who live abroad are dismayed with the circumstance of losing their citizenship when they acquire citizenship in other countries. Greek, chair of the Washington-based National Federation of Filipino American Associations (Nafaa), said.

"Observing the Philippines abroad, we see again and frustrated that there is a constant unanswered going on. We're losing a lot of globalone. Why don't we make and secure the country forward?" she said.

But with the relaxation of the rules, Filipino-Americans now have a reason to come home, stated said, eventually, settle here, according to Lewis.

"It's good news for the coun-

LYDIA NICOLAS-LEWIS

try because most of us—I'm speaking for my generation—professionals left the country from the '60s, '70s, '80s. Now it's 2005, we have reached the upper years of our lives and we're starting to think where we will retire. Florida, Southern California, Texas? Why not the Philippines?" she said.

"In the US, we have $1,000 social security benefit. In the Philippines, that is P50,000. It's better if we come back here."

Owning land

Until the Bi relaxed its rules, Filipino-Americans' attempts at starting businesses and acquiring property in the Philippines had been hobbled by their being nonresident Americans, Lewis said.

"The biggest stumbling block is that we're American citizens. Those who made good had left national one hand could not acquire land. We can buy a condo but we could not acquire land," she said.

College in Sorsogon

In her view, Lewis established a college in Sorsogon in 1999, but could not own a single share because she was an American citizen.

Older 2.5 million former Filipinos residing in the United States, Canada and Australia, only 2,500 have so far availed themselves of dual citizenship because of the "inclusive process" at the SE, according to Drilon.

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"Sleeping Child" 1995 by MALANG

"Mapa" by CHARLIE CO

"Carinosa" by SOCORRO MARTINEZ

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CEMEX PHILIPPINES FOUNDATION

ARPOVALO continues her amazing run.

Arevalo, Dy barge into Holcim semis

By Roy Luarca

CLARISSA JANE AREVALO IS STARTING to wear the laurels of her homegrown training.

The Filipina solid vet, coming off a five-month stint in India, bagged only the major milestone of the 10,000-Holcim ITF Women Circuit with a 6-2, 6-3 rubout over American qualifier Maureen Diaz yesterday at the Rizal Memorial Tennis Center.

The 20-year-old brunette, the semifinal of the country's women's tennis campaign in the coming Southeast Asian Games, will meet the winner between No. 7 Korean Kim Hae-sung and Bulacan Georgie Sioson, whose match was not over due to darkness.

Among females in the card stand was Filipina-American Jennie Dy, who scored a 6-3, 6-1 win over Hong Kong qualifier Zhang Ling. Dy, also a member of the SEA Games team, now has 5 Taiwanese Open W, six 6-0, 6-1 winners over local qualifier Melanie Mendoza.

Seeded No. 6 in the tournament, Arevalo finished No. 698 and top seed Sarawna Layon finished No. 1,000 in the WTA rankings.

Third seed Bulacan Bulkley Pangdemonel Tennessee's Kay Hsiao-Pang, 6-4, 6-3, to bring to quarterfinal meeting with second seed Lilia Dimaya, who prevailed over Hong Kong qualifier Chan Wing-yan, 6-1, 6-3.

Seeded No. 4 in the tournament, Arevalo finished No. 698 and top seed Sarawna Layon finished No. 1,000 in the WTA rankings.

Third seed Bulacan Bulkley Pangdemonel Tennessee's Kay Hsiao-Pang, 6-4, 6-3, to bring to quarterfinal meeting with second seed Lilia Dimaya, who prevailed over Hong Kong qualifier Chan Wing-yan, 6-1, 6-3.

San Mig-Air21 rematch today; Kings eye No.5

THEIR FIRST TWO ACHIEVED AT THE EXpense of the PBA's Elite pairs, the San Miguel Beermen are hoping to repeat the act and begin their climb out of the cellar in the San Miguel-Air21 Kings in the Smart Araneta Coliseum.

But the Beermen will have to do it once more. Hill, who moved to that double-overtime thriller in Santa City two weeks back. Hill-PBA can say cut short when the Beermen decided to replace him with Jason Johnson.

Though Johnson wasn't in uniform to repeat during the Beermen's lineup 85-81 against the San Lucia Realtors Wednesday night, San Miguel (1-4) is looking with its veteran import.

Johnson helped the Beermen until back from a 0-5, start to the 2003 Philippine Conference and a 500 Miguel took immediately known after losing Game 7 in its thriller series with Coca-Cola.

The Beermen are hoping the former University of New Orleans standout could restore the same old magic for the Reprise today at 4:00 p.m.

Also going for a repeat win are the Burning Lakeshore Kings when they duel with the Red Hot Rookies in the same game at 7:25 p.m.

Llamados later the action of Eric Menk, the Gin Kings (0-5) are seeking a fifth straight win over Air21's pride behind the Talk 'N Text Phone Pals (4-2).

Purefoods Chunkee (7-2) is back in the top five after beating Coca-Cola Wednesday.

The Express, who are reported to associate Arnold De Ocampo from acting as their coach for the Golden Abacus and keep on their 3-1 record.

The Gin Kings try to duplicate that win in the other game against the Red Bull Barako, who are reeling from back-to-back losses after winning four of their first six games.

Jose Mendoza

STANDINGS	W	L
Purefoods	7	2
Talk 'N Text	6	2
Ginebra	6	2
Alaska	5	2
Red Bull	4	4
Air21	3	5
Sta Lucia	3	5
Coca-Cola	2	6
San Miguel	1	6

Results Yesterday
Alaska 85 — San Miguel 81
Red Bull 92 — Coca-Cola 90 (overtime)
Talk 'N Text 110 — Red Bull Barako 96 (overtime)
Purefoods 92 — Air21 90

Today's Schedule
7:25 p.m. — Red Bull Barako vs Burning Lakeshore (game)

STA. LUCIA'S Ricky Calloway and San Miguel's Eliot Dedace's jockey for the rebound in Wednesday night's game.

Everything's set for grand SEA Games opening rite

EVERYTHING IS NOW IN PLACE—FROM SECURITY to parade route and marshals—for the following opening ceremonies of the 23rd Southeast Asian Games at the Quirino Grandstand.

Officials behind the three-hour show were in the Luneta yesterday to personally inspect the main stage and parade grounds and discuss the last-minute details for the first 23rd SEA Games.

"Everything's set now in place," said Virgilio Hizon, executive producer of the opening and closing ceremonies of the Philippine Southeast Asian Games Organizing Committee.

"Only minor details are to be polished, particularly the security arrangement in the area. But overall, we're very optimistic about it... they are going to love the show."

President Macapagal-Arroyo will lead the action in welcoming the more than 7,000 athletes, officials, members of the diplomatic corps and foreign guests in the ceremony that will be broadcast live in the region.

The local broadcast pool is composed of government networks BC-13, IBC-13 and RPN-9, as well as ABC-5.

Overall director and producer Maria Lilia Tabliga-Arroyo said around 2,000 people will be in attendance at the Quirino Grandstand, but for security, noted stage director Robert Tingco, said a dry run of the various opening activities will be held next week to shoulder all the details, including the security measures.

"The dry run next week will be the organizers' opportunity about 100,000 people to witness the event," said Tingco. "It's a security nightmare, and proper coordination is needed among security committees, protocol and secretariat."

Guiding a coordination meeting of the Quirino VIP Security Group yesterday, Senior Chief Police General Pedro Bulaong assured that security arrangements had been properly planned way ahead of the Games.

He said 5,000 uniformed men are to be assigned for the venue.

Champs to race in Marho Breeders' Cup

THE METROPOLITAN ASSOCIATION OF RACE HORSE Owners (Marho) reaps the year's biggest and richest homecoming event, the 30th Marho Breeders' Cup Racing Festival, when the great Nanchee at the Santa Ana Park.

With the cash pool expected to exceed 19 million, the event features the class of the local horse racing industry from the most promising prospects in the juvenile division led by rising colt Just Maxie's Issue and Aggressive, to commanding 3-year olds like the filly Bare Backs and the country's most celebrated 4-year Empire King and Crown Girl in the Classic.

"Wonder is truly poised to reign this 30th renewal of the Breeders' Cup Championships, which is also the first in years of the local horse breeding industry," said Marho president and Manila racing City Rep. Benito Abalos during the event's launch last Wednesday at the Hotel Intercontinental Manila in Makati.

The five Breeders' Cup Championship Races are the Juvenile Colts and the Juvenile Fillies for 2-year olds, the 3-year old Colt Mile, the 3-year old Filly Mile and the Classic for older horses. A challenge trophy, the Breeders' Cup Challenge, is also scheduled. The one-day festival is pinned about P100.7 million total cost.

Abalos chair Jennifer "Randy" Javier said the Breeders' Cup embodies Marho's commitment to provide an incentive for the breeding and raising of quality horses bred gallopers.

Pacquiao cancels US trip, begins Cebu training

By Sehar L. Lagamiya Contributor

MANNY PACQUIAO HAS CANCELLED HIS TRIP to the United States to take part in the pressure-filled exercise for his Jan. 21 rematch with Erik Morales of Mexico.

Pacquiao, who was scheduled to fly to the US with three associates this "winter" break, said he would fly to Cebu instead to start his tight preparation for Morales.

"I decided to stay here to also continue the change of plans although he ordered to give me details about the trip was aborted.

Pacquiao, who defeated Morales twice before, said he considered the boxing schedule a major role in improving Pacquiao's marketability through the box-and-road schedule.

Pacquiao has expressed unequivocal support his bosses, who is confident for boxing played a major role in improving Pacquiao's marketability through the box-and-road schedule.

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Pacquiao has expressed unequivocal support his bosses, who is confident for boxing played a major role in improving Pacquiao's marketability through the box-and-road schedule.

PACQUIAO: To start session of rematch soon

Manny Pacquiao's former business manager.

Morales said he was following a series of criticisms pointed to Arnulfo Camposo, who also point to the two setbacks. They cast questions on Morales's credibility in handling Pacquiao's career.

Pacquiao has expressed unequivocal support his bosses, who is confident for boxing played a major role in improving Pacquiao's marketability through the box-and-road schedule.

Pacquiao has expressed unequivocal support his bosses, who is confident for boxing played a major role in improving Pacquiao's marketability through the box-and-road schedule.

Harbour . . .

"I think, Manny is becoming used to playing with the big guys," said coach Danilo Pannarin. "We played well defensively but we still have to increase aggression."

Lyceum scored its best first half, firing 11 points on the second half including two triples after he missed his first three three-point attempts.

Scorers:

Ateneo:

LYCEUM (69) Ilustre 18, Antonio 12, Segovia 11, Garbo 10, Sandoval 5, Pinthong 5, Rosas 4, Abad 3, Dela Cruz, Lindayag, Perez 1, Santos 0, Cervantes 0, Bautista 0.

ATENEO (59)— Gonzales 20, Jamilla 13, Tongson 7, Baguio 6, Rosas 4, Garcia 3, Manalastas 3, Santos 2, Lim, Salinas 2, Tolentino 0, Dela Cruz 0, Mendoza 0, Sumaoang 0, Lim, Bautista 0, Tolentino 0, Dela Cruz 0, Mendoza 0, Sumaoang 0, Lim, Bautista 0.

Lyceum

MEMBERS (20)— Gonzales 20, Jamilla 13, Tongson 7, Baguio 6, Rosas 4, Garcia 3, Manalastas 3, Santos 2, Lim, Salinas 2, Tolentino 0, Dela Cruz 0, Mendoza 0, Sumaoang 0, Lim, Bautista 0, Tolentino 0, Dela Cruz 0, Mendoza 0, Sumaoang 0, Lim, Bautista 0.

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SPORTSWATCH

Drag race kickoff roast, but gets bigger

AFTER BEING SUBJECT TO SEVERAL SCHEDULE CHANGES OUT OF BEING THE 2005 PCSO Philippine National Drag Racing Championship series finally commenced this weekend at the Clark Special Economic Zone in Pampanga with the postponement expected to make the event bigger. Organizers had been using the latest time to finalize preparations for the event, which was originally scheduled Oct. 29. "We were disappointed that heavy rains forced us to reschedule the original launch of the series," said PCSO Drag Racing director Ed Cuadra. "But on the other hand, it gives us more time to refine the days of the race." A cash purse of P50,000 awaits the overall PRO class champion today featuring seven selected contenders from Manila, Batangas, Cebu and Cagayan de Oro. The event is held in cooperation with the Automotive Association of the Philippines, is sponsored by PCSO, Motorcoat Specialties.

Growee Hoops prov'l team gets backing

THE PHILIPPINE CHARITY SWEEPSTAKES OFFICE (PCSO) HAS MADE THE provincial basketball team of Cotabato Hoops Television one of the sports projects PCSO intends to support in the basketball-like association of its provincial clients through sponsorship of a team in the Philippine Basketball Association. The Growee Hoops School, also sponsored by Spalding, Asset and Milestone, ranked 10th in the prestigious Asset International School meet in Baguio City last Sept. 10-Oct. 2. The three-time champion from Cotabato entered in the Three On, including Barbara, Edward St. Jones Intramural and Sports Club, Cotabato Hoops Television, Inc.

The WORLD

Lilian Lawrence B. Suñez

Triple Jordan hotel bombings kill 57

AMMAN—IRAQ'S AL-QAIDA GROUP CLAIMED responsibility on Thursday for suspected suicide bombings on luxury hotels in US ally Jordan that killed 57 people and wounded 110.

In Wednesday night's synchronized attacks, two bombs exploded while crowds were celebrating weddings, leaving blood and destruction at Amman's luxury Grand Hyatt hotel and the nearby Radisson SAS. A third blast targeted a Days Inn hotel.

Al-Qaida in Iraq, led by Jordanian militant Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, said in a statement on an Islamist website that "a group of our best lions" had launched the attacks in Jordan.

"Entire hotels were drawn, while the Jordanian dragon had turned into a backyard for the customers of the hotels, the drug and sex traders," said the message signed by the group's spokesperson. Its authenticity could not be verified.

Police said they thought the blasts were the work of suicide bombers. Eyewitnesses described an all-night bullbreak and US officials said they suspected the network was to blame.

Jordan's King Abdullah blamed a "deviant and misled group" for the blasts. "The attacks targeted and killed innocent Jordanian civilians," the king, whose country is bordered by Iraq, Syria, Israel and the West Bank, said in a statement.

Al-Qaida in Iraq's statement said: "Let the tyrant of Amman know that his protection ... for the Jews has become a target for the mujahideens and their monks, and he has to expect the worst."

Jordan is one of two Arab countries that have signed peace treaties with Israel. It helped the United States in the war on Iraq, where Zarqawi's group is part of an anti-US insurgency.

Jordan had so far been spared major attacks on foreigners despite its proximity to Iraq and popularity as a tourist destination, but the authorities had been braced for trouble.

"The initial investigations as to the crime that the blasts that caused the deaths of 57 people and wounded 110 people had been witnessed by explosive devices and suicide bombings," said a statement issued by the Jordanian Cabinet.

Interior Minister Awni Darbas told Reuters the bombs at the hotels, all run by US chains, were aimed to detonate almost simultaneously.

ATTACK! Mohamed al-Hilfawi and his bride Nadia al-Alami pose during their wedding party at Radisson SAS hotel before an explosion ripped through their wedding reception in the heart of Amman Nov. 9. The bride and the groom were wounded and both lost their fathers in the deadly blast. —

AL-ZARQAWI, Iraq's most-wanted man in US parlance —

Jordan shared its borders in try to stop suspects fleeing and security officials said scores of people had been arrested.

Deputy Prime Minister Marwan al-Muashar said most of the victims were Jordanians, but China said three Chinese were among those killed. A Palestinian diplomat said a senior Palestinian officer and two other officials were among the dead. Reuters

China reports 2 new outbreaks of bird flu

BEIJING—CHINA HAS CHECKED two new outbreaks of the deadly H5N1 strain of bird flu in poultry in the northeast, bringing the total number of outbreaks to six since the beginning of last month, Chinese media said on Thursday.

Premier Wen Jiabao warned this week that the country was facing a "very serious situation" as the disease had last been brought under control and was likely to spread.

"It certainly is a significant outbreak," said World Health Organization (WHO) spokesperson Bob Wasko in Beijing. "It seems that they are extremely concerned about it." Xinhua news agency said the new outbreaks occurred in villages near the cities of Fuxin and Jinzhou, both of which are close to Heishan in Liaoning province where bird flu in poultry was reported.

About 1,100 chickens died in the latest two outbreaks and the National Avian Influenza Reference Laboratory confirmed on Wednesday that the virus was H5N1, the official China Daily said.

The WHO has strict system in line with the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization to China authorities, seeking more details on the Liaoning cases.

"We have done everything in line with the requirements and standards of the normal government," an official at the Liaoning Animal Supervision and Management Bureau told Reuters, declining to give details. Reuters

Key Asian militant dead, but terror threat remains

MEU, INDONESIA—INDONESIAN police on Thursday confirmed Malaysian militant Azahari Husin had been killed during a gun battle with police, saying he died in blast himself to foil federal orderers a bomb in time.

National police chief General Sutanto told Bangkok's top police proved Azahari was one of two militants killed in the town of Batu in East Java province on Wednesday. Azahari was either shot dead or killed when his bomb-vest exploded a bomb.

Indonesia, Australia and many experts welcomed the death of one of Southeast Asia's most wanted Islamic militants, who was blamed for a string of attacks, but some cautioned it would not eliminate the threat of radical violence in the region.

"The identification of the suspect at the victim scene according to the fingerprint data was identical to Azahari," Sutanto told reporters in Batu.

"The condition of Azahari's corpse is that it was severed around the legs and torso. He was not able to reach the button for a bomb," Sutanto said. But he did not, but the other one was able to commit a suicide bombing."

That made it hard to determine what actually killed Azahari and Sutanto, adding police found 30 bombs inside the house where he had holed up.

Dubbed the "demolition man" by newspapers in his native Malaysia, Azahari was the computer brains behind several bomb attacks on Western targets in Indonesia and the top bomb-maker in remark Mantiqah, a shadowy network linked to al-Qaeda.

Authorities say the electronics expert designed and supervised the making of the car bomb which caused the most damage in 2002 attacks on the resort island of Bali which killed 202 people, including 88 Australians.

Imanuel Mbai, who heads Indonesia's antiterrorist coordinating board, said the group led by Azahari "is very significant" and the police's activities "had reduced their capability".

"But when we talk holistically about terrorism, this is not the end. A movement with ideological and political motives won't disappear if the leading figure dies," he told Reuters. Reuters

US, Europe to offer new nuclear proposal to Iran

WASHINGTON—WASHINGTON, LONDON, Paris and Berlin will make a new offer in Iran to avoid a confrontation over its suspected nuclear weapons program, The New York Times and Thursday quoting US and European officials.

The proposed would let Iran conduct very limited nuclear activities on its territory, but would limit it to new, off-limits enrichment processes to Russia, the officials said.

The offer was discussed at a meeting here Tuesday between US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and International Atomic Energy Agency Director General Mohamed ElBaradei, who has agreed to present it to the Iranians, they added.

Also, according to the officials, urged that Iran be given a two-week deadline for its response, which should come before the IAEA board meets on Nov. 24.

Iran has been under international pressure to give up its uranium enrichment program, insisting it is intended for peaceful purposes only and not for making nuclear weapons, which the United States suspects the Islamic nation is seeking to develop.

On Sept. 24, the IAEA passed a British-French-German resolution stating, for the first time since the IAEA began investigating Iran in February 2003, that Tehran was in "non-compliance" with the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), mainly for hiding its nuclear atomic activities for almost two decades.

A finding of non-compliance is an automatic trigger for taking the matter to the Security Council, which can impose sanctions, but could be difficult to implement because it lacks support from Russia and China, who have veto power on the Council. AFP

2 suicide bombers kill 33 in Baghdad restaurant

BAGHDAD, Iraq—TWO SUICIDE BOMBERS detonated themselves near a restaurant frequented by Baghdad police, killing at least 33 people and seriously injuring 59, police said.

The bombers struck at about 9:45 a.m., when officers usually stop by the restaurant for breakfast, Police Maj. Abdel-Hussein Mhaoul said. Three police officers and six civilians were killed in the blast and 24 others injured, among them 20 civilians.

The blast came just before British Foreign Secretary Jack Straw was expected in the country for meetings with Prime Minister Ibrahim al-Jaafari, the prime minister's office said.

Sattar Mohammad, a housewife who lives nearby, said she rushed outside when she heard the explosion.

"I went out to see the restaurant heavily damaged. There were bodies, mostly civilians, and bloodied eyewitnesses inside the place. This is a crime not for Iraqi only; targeted civilians means people leaving their homeland," she said.

There were no Americans in the area, she said.

"I do not understand why most of the time it is the Iraqi police are killed," she added.

The violence comes after the defiant vows in Saddam Hussein's trial and it will not draw up for the new session Nov. 28 unless the court accepts its demands for "neutral international intervention" to guarantee security.

Their chief lawyer, Mohammad Al-Dujaili was in intensive care after suffering a heart attack. Another lawyer in the trial, already threatened by the assassinations and questions about legal standards, Adel al-Zubeidi, lawyer for former Vice President Taha Yassin Ramadan, was killed by gunmen in Baghdad last month. Another attorney was wounded. AP

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Cavaliers silence SuperSonics

NEW YORK—LEBRON JAMES POURED IN A GAME-HIGH 31 points, including 11-of-11 from the free-throw line, as the Cleveland Cavaliers rolled to a 112-85 win over the Seattle SuperSonics on Wednesday at Quicken Loans Arena.

Larry Hughes contributed 21 points to the Cleveland cause while Ira[illegible] Marshall had 13 points and nine rebounds as Cavaliers won for the third time in five games this season.

The Cavaliers were helped by a more perfect night from the free-throw line, making a franchise-record 28 consecutive attempts before their first miss.

Ray Allen ended 28 points for the SuperSonics in a losing effort while Nenad Vilanovy had 15.

In Philadelphia, Allen Iverson hit a game-high 25-point and Andre Iguodala added 22 points, seven rebounds and five assists to guide the 76ers to a 112-87 win over the Dallas Mavericks.

Kyle Korver drained 10 points and Chris Webber chipped in with 19 points and 11 rebounds for the 76ers, who improved their second consecutive win after opening the season with three losses.

In Indianapolis, Ron Artest scored 24 points and Jermaine O'Neal added 17 and grabbed eight rebounds to help the Pacers to a 95-89 win over the Miami Heat.

Dwyane Wade scored 29 points, grabbed 11 rebounds and dished out six assists for the Heat, who continue to play without injured Shaquille O'Neal.

In San Antonio, Tony Parker had 23 points and 10 assists while Tony Parker chipped in with 22 points and dished out six assists, sparking the NBA champion San Antonio Spurs to a 96-86 victory over the Bobcats.

In Oklahoma City, Jason Terry had 20 points and scored eight rebounds as the Orlando Magic downed the New Orleans Hornets 98-85.

In Chicago, Bibi Mutombo had a game-high 23 points and Michael Greenberg hit a pair of clutch free throws with less than seven seconds to play to lift the Bulls to a 92-90 win over the Golden State Warriors. Source:

THE HOUSTON ROCKETS TRAVEL East on their take on the Miami Heat in the NBA today at 9 a.m. Dolphin at 9 p.m.) on ESPN Sports. Meanwhile, the Phoenix Suns host the Detroit Pistons in the Arena in West Jerusa. Rahat Spurs will rehearse the game starting at 11:30 a.m.

ORLANDO Magic's Dwayne Jones jumps goes up for a shot against New Orleans Hornets' Chris Andersen, Orlando win, 98-85.

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ISSN 0116-2042 PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER VOL. XXIV, NO. 339

OPINION

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Foul play

WHERE DOES THE LOYALTY OF EDUARDO PAREDES lie? This undersecretary of foreign affairs, who is also executive director of the Presidential Commission on the RP-US Visiting Forces Agreement, seems more interested in lawyering for the Americans than defending the Republic of the Philippines and its citizens who pay his salary. It is not his job to come up with the ifs, ands, or buts that would give the Americans leeway to bring out of the Philippines their servicemen who sexual assaulted of rape. His job is to apply the most stringently pro-Filipino interpretation of that agreement to bear on the issues at hand. If he does not want to do this, he should be replaced; if he wants to do this, but is being prevented by his higher ups from doing so, he should resign.

Editorial

A "senior official" of the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority has said US officials have intimated, by way of "unofficial requests," that they'd prefer their soldiers transferred to Okinawa. Asked for his response, Paredes gave the broadest, kindest, most generous interpretation of the Visiting Forces Agreement possible, as far as the convenience of the accused is concerned. The agreement, Paredes says, does not stipulate where accused servicemen should be detained; it only requires that they are held in US custody and that they be produced whenever hearings are held. Furthermore, Paredes says, the Philippines cannot compel the American to keep accused US servicemen in the country.

Mr. awardee of Paredes speaks with the full approval and authority of the Philippine government. Furthermore, Paredes should explain if his cost-jarringly views coincide with the statements he's made. The country deserves to know if its government is so obsessed with pandering to the United States, that it is prepared to junk justice, or whether we simply have the least example of a long line of Philippine officials more interested in serving US interests instead of standing up for the rights of fellow Filipinos. A tragedy is perilously close to turning into a farce, and the public ought to know who is poised to make a mockery of the investigation of the rape in Subic.

If the VFA is silent as to whether American servicemen accused of crimes should be kept within the territorial boundaries of the Philippines, now is the time for the government to assert that logic dictates that the accused be kept in the Philippines pending the conclusion of the investigations and for the duration of the trial. The VFA exists to grant a tremendous concession to American interests by granting custody of any accused to US officials; the Philippines, for its part, has the irreducible duty to vigorously prosecute any crime that foreign servicemen may have committed against Filipinos on Philippine soil.

The crime of rape is equally reprehensible before the eyes of Philippine and American law. Abuses committed by American servicemen abroad, whether in allied countries or not, are a cause for shame among Americans and a cause for justifiable outrage on the part of the citizens of the countries in which the abuses take place, not least because such crimes are a violation of the hospitality accorded US servicemen and a breach of the good relations that should exist not only between allied governments but also their peoples.

Sen. Richard Gordon, a good friend of the Americans, has tried to be conciliatory by saying, "This incident does not speak for the VFA, for the American people. It's just them [the accused rapist and companions]. Let's just prosecute them to the hilt." Gordon went further and hired Manuel Quijano to serve as lawyers for the victim.

The senator, thus far, has acted correctly. Let the accused be prosecuted to the hilt; they will certainly be accorded the best defense possible. It is not the job, however, of Philippine authorities, to make the experience pleasant or convenient for Americans, and a mockery of justice for Filipinos.

This is an important case. The VFA was ratified by President Ramos and Estrada as a means of building a new, more equitable, relationship between the United States and the Philippines. We do not see anything equitable about such obvious subservience on the part of Filipino officials who grant Americans extreme latitude in interpreting the VFA or, worse, Filipinos like that unnamed doctor in Subic who offended the victim by suggesting she "had it coming." Between Paredes, that doctor and the driver of the van, the worst enemy of the Filipino remains his fellow Filipino.

What is news?

As I See It

Neal H. Cruz

IN THE WAKE OF THE LATEST OOO BOOM OF the Armed Forces of the Philippines and the Philippine National Police—both of which got the wrong man—President Macapagal-Arroyo vetoed her target not on the law enforcers but on the media.

Why the media? What have the media got to do with it?

Apparently, her line was embarrassed by the news has been, running so close to each other that she has to look for a scapegoat. The original arrest set, of course, the intelligence arms of the AFP and the PNP and the CIAs got involved, so it became of her positions for claiming media for the arrest of every enemy now arrested. When the arrest turned out to be a dud, she got mad and her line "Pride, after all, was, is, and always will be Ate Glo's biggest sin.

She cannot blame the AFP and the PNP over, if they deserve the blame for the sloppy job since they hold the guns and drive the tanks and if you like them, they may not march to Mendiola and make the demonstrators the Glin-ing have many faults, but she has enough sense to know that she is standing on shaky ground as it is without irritating the AFP and the PNP.

So she has to vent the blame on the media, she "accuses" that reports and images of every misdirected and ignore the good things that she has done." She seems to think that without the media reporting the corruption, cheating and abuses in government, the Philippine world be in much better shape. Such self-centeredness! She has lived on the table, provide jobs for the people, or put roads over there beside her, so how they won't know the dirty stuff they are in. And if media, instead of telling them impressive scenes, published only her achievements, no matter how little, the people would think that she is Heracles, that they are so lucky to have Ate Glin as President.

In other words, when she wants is a newsmen the Marcos limited law era when the newspapers were censored and no unpleasant news could escape him and pirates smuggled in guerrilla

(CONTINUED ON PAGE A11)

On suppressing the truth commission

Passion for Reason

René C. Pampolayon

THE PAPERS REPORT THAT MALACAÑANG officials are looking at whether the organizers of the Citizens' Congress for Truth and Accountability (CCTA) may be charged criminally with "fanning to sedition." I sincerely hope they abandon that folly.

Investigations and commissions are nothing new, and have a noble history of helping wounded nations heal themselves. There are differences, for sure, in the way various truth commissions have been formed (whether by the government or by civil society), in their mandates (some cover only the period of the rule of the offenders, or solely to unveil the truth—"amnesty without amnesia"), or whether they are conducted by the political and military elements in connection their respective pasts. They all share, however, a basis in the power of truth itself to usher survival instinct, and a decision for those who face the light that is truth distress or banish our doubts.

By way of example, Argentina's National Commission on the Disappearance of Persons created in 1983 by President Raul Alfonsin, consisting of witness, religious leaders, journalists and some legislators, then famous report "Nunca Más" documented 8,000 cases of forced disappearances (or "salvaging," as the dastardly Filipino of Philippine origin would say). South Africa's Commission of Truth and Reconciliation was set up in 1995 by parliament to inquire into human rights abuses during the apartheid era. Chaired by Anglican Archbishop Desmond Tutu, the commission submitted its report in 1998 to President Nelson Mandela.

Many other countries have created their own truth commissions: Bolivia, Chad, Chile, Ecuador, Ghana, Haiti, Mexico, Nigeria, Rwanda, South Korea, Sri Lanka, Uganda and Uruguay.

Non-believers in the CCTA will no doubt say that the truth commissions above were officially sponsored, and not by civil society like that is encouraging the argument. Neither our Presidents nor Congress seems eager to know the truth, and indeed that is why the CCTA was formed—as a desperate measure to know what the President wouldn't tell and answers the questions the Congress wouldn't ask.

In point of fact, there have been truth commissions which were not created by governments. Some were fostered by the United Nations in East Timor, the Dr. Ramsey Clark Commission in Iraq, Tribunals in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Tibet and Slovenia-Milosevic. In the hands, the UN called for an inquiry into the violence that caused 50,000 civilian deaths.

Others were created as part of peace negotiations. The Commission on the Truth for El Salvador was created by the United Nations "hope" as part of a 1994-brokered peace accord. Guatemala's Historical Clarification Commission, chaired by the famed German representative, professor Christian Tomuschat, formed "Memory of Silence" as part of the settlement between the Guatemalan government and the National Guatemalan Revolutionary Unit.

Others were formed by civil society in Berlin, religious groups, labor unions, a local university and human rights advocates formed a commission to focus against the disappearances by President Corazón Aquino, expected what claim to present was the "Counter Coup," marked by the Saut, Kuno Bartas, the was later tried and exonerated. In Brazil, the archbishop of Sao Paulo, with the support of the Brazilian Council of Churches (WCC), organized a team to create the human rights abuses using statements of political prisoners. In Paraguay, the Comisión de Iglesias para Ayuda de Emergencia, also with WCC support, documented human rights violations under dictator Alfredo Stroessner. In Chile, in Rwanda, NGOs created an investigative commission on the genocide taken international agencies were not invited to act.

As we can see, the composition of the CCTA is comparable to those in other countries. Indeed, various Peruvian commissions have included even the Catholic Bishops Conference, the opposition, and spokespersons. Can you beat that?

If at all, what is unique with the CCTA is the timing. With a few exceptions, truth commissions are typically part of "post-conflict" or "transitional" justice. We finding where the conflict began and went to all battlefields in the Philippines today, because what we have is a seemingly continuum of conflicts (happened by point of inertia...).

So just say if I sound as academic, because this piece actually relates to my favorite topic: to study our own dilemma of international criminal justice. Truth commissions are more than just about catharsis and therapy. They are actually an exercise "to exhibit the moral high ground by calling what actually took place" and by establishing a moral account of the historical record.

The one dilemma of the citizens behind the CCTA, members, is that they must first themselves to the role of "truth-tellers in the face power and doing their best to unveil what did what to whom and when, period. Before they to engage in social analysis, by identifying structural phenomena [and] proposing deep changes." In society's view risk feeling viewed as but another voice in a world of disputed opinions and theories. . . . Their reports might [demonstrate more] sense of objectivity by being absorbed into the broad play of political ideas and historical debate."

A lawyer's study recalled a famous quote: "The truth shall set you free, but first it will piss you off." Well, Filipinos do their tax returns; we never even find out. With the help of the CCTA, it's time we did.

Comment: rcpampolan@yahoo.com

How to make Doha succeed

COMMENTARY

Paul Wolfowitz

THE DOHA DEVELOPMENT ROUND OF TRADE talks will be judged by one simple test: does it increase the prosperity of poor countries by cutting the rich countries' barriers to farming more than they have helped industry?

If the answer is yes, the round will succeed in enabling tens of millions of people to lift themselves out of abject poverty even the same decade agriculture protection is abolished. We have to find a better title. In most countries, it will be the difference between a healthy life or an early death from a preventable disease.

If the answer is no, and the talks end without giving developing countries—especially the very poor, particularly in African countries—new opportunity to sell more of what they produce, the Doha development agenda will be dead. Strong leadership and cooperation is needed to ensure the December meeting becomes a new milestone on the fight against poverty, a moment when concern for the poorest people takes precedence over politics.

It is easy, not sad, that holds the keys to creating jobs and raising incomes. It is trade that will allow poor countries to generate growth. Inspiring debt abuse without it. It is trade that has helped alert millions of Chinese people poverty in the past 20 years and that can happen elsewhere. In Brazil, for example, the 20 percent of the population that lives on less than $2 a day is looking to more open agricultural markets in developed countries as a means to lift themselves out of poverty.

But success will not happen. If the rich nations, which account for more than 70 percent of the value of farming, flow domestic interest groups. And it will not happen if developing countries do not reduce their own barriers to trade, and the poor of Asia, Latin America and elsewhere may not vote in rich countries but their poverty has a direct impact in rich countries, equally powerful ways. Increasingly, we see that people in poor countries face the hazards of insecurity and travel in search of work. This is a logical human behavior. Of course the best opportunities for safety, stability and work are in rich countries. The widespread, 30,000 Africans wanting to immigrate, and Algeria for a chance to reach Spain or just the hotel, but nationals not the land, people to roam a better life not safer country. The best solution is to help poor countries create hope and opportunity for their people.

Opening markets creates new opportunities not just for India and China to sell to the United States, the European Union and Japan, but for investors to do trade and China. But none of the poorest countries need help to take advantage of trade opportunities, they need greater assistance in building roads and ports to connect their goods to markets. Increased support for trade is necessary, but complement to the Doha round and the World Bank is now doing will help how to deliver it.

Above all, there is a moral argument. How can we justify spending $200 billion on support to agricultural producers in developed countries—nearly the total gross domestic product of Africa and has been the total amount of resources aid? How can we justify imposing barriers on the poorest 2 billion people that are twice as high as those we face? How can we accept a system in which Africa's share of world exports has fallen from 3.3 percent to less than 2 percent in the past 20 years—and part of the Doha development round is the need to reduce protection on agriculture. Unless serious concessions are made by all sides—developing countries as well as developed countries, for the United States, Japan, to reverse the decline of trade talks will fail and the people who will suffer the most are the world's poor.

Everyone has work to do. The United States needs to do more to cut its subsidies substantially. The EU needs to do more to market access to give real significant new trade opportunities. Brazil, India and other developing countries need to open their markets in services and manufacturing, and lower their own agricultural protection.

We must also consider not only what is being offered but what is being kept off the table. Only five products account for almost half the $200 billion in annual support to agricultural producers, or twice as much as the total value of exports to less developed countries.

Often, a single product comprises billions of dollars in support—milk produces more than $20 billion in support, according to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, while the rice industry receives $17 billion a year. But poor countries often depend on a single product, one that might represent just a tiny fraction of a rich country's overall trade. Certain subsidies in rich countries may be less than $5 billion per year, but they are targeted to investments in developed African producers.

These are difficult issues and it may be uncomfortable for political leaders in the industrialized countries to step forward and give up subsidies and other barriers. In the long run, however, the benefits to consumers and taxpayers from lower prices and the dynamism and opportunities found by the world's poorest people. They are counting on us—we must deliver results for them.

The Doha development round must succeed and success means that developing countries have genuine opportunity to trade. The lives and livelihoods of millions of poor people depend on it.

Paul Wolfowitz is president of the World Bank.

Monosyllabic surnames

PINOY KASI

Michael L. Tan

I WAS JOHN RESEARCH FOR A LECTURE ABOUT CHARD surnames in the Philippines when I chanced upon an entry in Wikipedia, that wonderful online people's encyclopedia, listing the most popular surnames in different countries.

Before reading on, you might want to guess first which ones are on the list. I'm sure many of you're thinking of the ones we generic De La Cruz, and some right...ish on the list, but appears in No. 2 after, with Garcia.

Aiko Cruz, the other Pinoy blockbuster surname, is Dela Santos, De los Reyes, Garcia, Gonzales, Lim, Martinez, Mendoza, Mercado, Ramos, Reyes and Tan. (No, if you were counting, the list is a bit strange, with a total of 12. But that's fine since my surname is the lucky 13th.)

The surnames tell us a bit of Philippine history, mainly about the Spanish colonial influences. Notice that 11 of the 13 surnames were assigned to us by the Spaniards. Not a single "indigenous" surname—for example, Bulanglulan—is on the list.

Hidden surnames

What's intriguing is that the most common surnames make it to the list—Lim and Tan, which, incidentally, are my names and politicians on names. This can be explained since these are among the most common surnames in the province of Fujian, which produced the most migrants for the Philippines.

I've been called why I'm the surname are not? Lim means Blue. Tan means red. Both are common in Fujian, and the names are usually take one word. The surnames have meanings. Wang, for example, means a king, and Lim, a forest.

Written in Chinese characters, these family names don't make sense throughout the country since the entire country uses one written script. But because there are different Chinese languages, or dialects, and different pronunciations, which is why when they're romanized, they take on many variations. Thus in Putonghua or Mandarin, the national language, you will hear a surname pronounced and transcribed as Chen, but this is Chan in Cantonese and Tan in Hokkien (or Minnan), the language spoken by most ethnic Chinese in the Philippines.

There aren't that many Chinese surnames, with about 200 accounting for 96 percent of the population, according to one study conducted in 1990. Putonghua has the most common surnames in China, found in Putonghua. With some help from my father, I'm listing them together with their Pinyin romanizations: Li (Lee), Wang (Wong), Zhang (Chang), Liu (Lau), Chen (Tan), Yang (Yeo), Huang (Ng), Zhao (Tio), Zhou (Chiu), Wu (Go or Ngo), Xu (Tsoi), Sun (Suan), Ma (Be), Zhu (Chu), Hu (Oh), Guo (Kwok), Lin (Lim) and Zhou (Chiu).

There are other Fujian surnames in the Philippines, as we see some of them and, going in the reverse direction, give them Philippine equivalents: Ang (Hong), Chua (Cua or Tiu), Siong (Tiong), Yap (Ong), Koh (Go or Wee), and Ty or Tee (Dyong).

Syllabic surnames

Not all the Chinese Filipinos stayed to their original monosyllabic names. Some eventually adopted Spanish-sounding surnames. Some of the Romans, for example, are actually Chuas or Tans, and a Tiu is a Tiuseco or Tiuseco. Others just adopted the surname Lopez.

Other Chinese families customized their parents's full name to desire a new name. Expansion is a well-known example, with their origins going several generations back to someone whose name was probably pronounced Co Hoang Ba. Their descendants include Cojuangco, Sucaingco, Tuazon, Tanhueloc, Limchaysong.

Still another interesting story is that some names were concocted new surnames around sibling rank, using the Hokkien words: Future, a tool to mean "other grandson," followed by Bitoc, Sanzoni, Sioco, Soiano and Lacson. I guess when the prized son's family planning time, there were only six grandsons.

This hybridization of surnames by overseas Chinese again tells us a lot about history, that time about the way the migrants blended into their new environments. In Thailand, the Chinese integrated rapidly into their new home country, and took up surnames that "sounded" most Thai, sincere. That is why you have Thai surnames that are totally different from others, and that each one had to have 10 characters, the Chinese ended up customizing an ancestor's full name, while adding on Thai features or sounds, producing idiosyncratic names like Bhirapornsuwan. It is another clue of the tenacity of our race, "indi pwersa" Thai surnames were taken...its example, Sahachaisaeng.

In Indonesia, the Chinese were particularly forced to take up Indonesian-sounding names because there was very strong anti-Chinese feelings, especially around 1965 when there was a bloody anti-communist purge that resulted in many Chinese being massacred. A more subtle name made into Chinese, and the Chinese were pressured to be communist.

The Philippines has been fairly relaxed about Chinese migrants, but anti-Chinese prejudice does exist. Some years ago, when they people may not even be aware of, such as when they play with the surnames (for example, for late translators), which is also a common practice in Japan.

Here, too, that the Department of foreign affairs requires additional documentation for Intsi (one passport application) if they have "foreign-sounding surnames." Guess whose application process is streamlined more?

Roots

The monosyllabic surnames are here to stay—just look through your phone directories and you'll see what I mean. Many Filipinos with these surnames are products of repeated intermarriages, so the "original" Chinese ancestor who migrated to the Philippines may date several generations back.

But if you're interested, you just might be able to trace back your roots. You have the best chance of finding your ancestor's name if you are a native speaker of one Chinese grandparents is buried. Even do and the tombstone is in Chinese, it should have that ancestor's full Chinese name, as well as the village in China where he or she originally came from. Be village-referred is on the list as an ancestral home.

If you're able to go back to that list in, which is more likely to be in Fujian province, you should be able to find the ancestral village, which is where your roots are, and where you belong. Be prepared for the hordes of relatives who coming you back.

But be probably going to see many of those monosyllabic surnames in the Philippines. There's now a new wave of Chinese migrants, many of whom are not from Fujian and therefore our own monosyllabic surnames.

We also have a growing number of Koreans and they too are monosyllabic surnames. I studied some of these Korean surnames and they were quite consistent with finding the way from Han (or Hon), Lee (or Yi and I), Park (or Pak and Bak), Choi (or Choe) and Jung (or Chung, Jeong). The Koreans keep good records of their clans, listed not just on the surnames but the region of origin. They tend to prefer polygamous marriages among people with the same surname and region of origin. Their rate of interethnic prostitution, since Kim and Lee alone account for 16 percent of the population.

A nightmare relived

AT LARGE

Nina Jimenez-David

ON THE SAME DAY THAT THIS PAPER HIGHlighted a report that an unnamed public official (let the Ombudsman dismiss account of rape had not granted to be questioned (or Obando), there was a story in the inside pages about a US Embassy official criticizing the Philippine government as "not doing enough" to curb human trafficking.

US Embassy (Manila) Charge d'affaires Kirk Belland was quoted as saying that while no one is to be prosecuted for the crime of human trafficking in the country the US State Department has decided to bump the Philippines to Tier 2 of its watch list.

The US government's ranking of the Manila administration, he claims, failure to take a high profile role in the global campaign against trafficking in persons, alienating many governments by choosing countries according to their point of interest. Belland said the US was willing to help the government in prosecution and conviction but that you received a demagogue to "let them go out," he had threatened.

Unfortunately the attitude of both officials in Ohio and those reported by the Embassy official is failing to identify a criminal and let, and that the way to go, second to this crime besides others is to encourage the women and children who fall victims to traffickers, arrest the traffickers, prosecute them and punish them severely.

Make no mistake, I feel the same way, too. I think those who coddle in persons, mainly by purposes of prostitution, deserve to rot in jail, if not be transported permanently to more than Malay-sia. Illegal recruiting is more than enough reason for police and immigration officials to flush its roots in the states of women and both the "sending" and "receiving" countries, the commodification of women's bodies and exploitation of them for sexual purposes is a crime that must be stopped, the incredible insensitivity displayed by a US Embassy official in referring Filipinos about our lack of concern in trafficking, while the embassy itself is providing aid and shelter to an ex-military personnel who stand of gang-raping a Filipina.

HUMAN trafficking is defined as the illegal transport of people within a country or across borders for purposes of prostitution or labor under slavery-like conditions.

But the problem can be tackled and traded even without hearing their hometowns, especially if their hometowns play host to visiting foreign troops, regardless from time or exactly locale. One of the most effective aspects of the presence of US troops in the RP is the Visiting Forces Agreement between the Philippines and the US that would have allowed their exercise and stay, was the very provision was instituted in Angeles and Olongapo, ala of the city's biggest industry. I remember the days immediately after the US bases were closed by the late Sen. Jose Diokno who, while extolling around the area of clubs and brothels in Olongapo, asked plaintively "Is this the way to treat a hero?"

The sex workers in Angeles and Olongapo may not have been trafficked out of the country, but the sailors, soldiers and Marines would have been trafficked into the Philippines, and the money they earned by selling their bodies, their time, their attention to a little while, left children they inevitably left behind, and putting our nation in shame.

This was the nightmare scenario that opponents of the Visiting Forces Agreement painted when the VFA was being debated. And with this second hand-table rape case, the nightmare has been brought back in vivid color. It's fairly obvious that the US military doesn't appear to consider the safety and human rights of persons a priority when it entered into the "educational" needs of their troops overseas. And they don't hesitate as far not doing enough against traffickers? How about making an example of the Marines?

The black subordinate officer could show its resolve to end all forms of sexual exploitation, even when the victim is hardened trafficking, by telling the 10 Filipinos to release the Marines to the custody of Philippine authorities. Sure, their act is covered by the VFA, but what's to stop them from doing the right and moral thing?

ADDED to the chorus of voices raised in anger, disgust, sympathy and concern over the Subic rape case is the blistered commentary in the July 2005 issue of SCIENTIST, an internet magazine (SCI Inc. Vol. 2, allegedly by an American environment who took part in a recent joint military exercise under the Visiting Forces Agreement between the United States and the Philippines. The writer, who refused to be named for fear of harassment whatever his Agreement under our circumstances, deserves to be raped are violated in any way. His commentary calls the exercise's requirements and rules express our concern and sympathy for the rape victim.

He appeals to all concerned parties not to politicize support and aversion to the victim. He also urges the Department of Justice to fully enforce the anti-Rape Law of 1997 and ensure a speedy investigation and prosecution of the case. The SCIENTIST remains committed to see that justice is served. As the secretariat of the 15-member Visiting Forces Agreement Coordinating Committee (VFACC), we will continue to help ensure that the agreement contributes to efforts to eliminate gender-based violence.

In the light of recent developments, we, together with women and others, strongly urge government not to grant the alleged request of the US government to release the US Marine suspect. Such move will seriously weaken the assertion of our sovereignty as well to make progress in the area of human rights.

Paul Wolfowitz is president of the World Bank.

Memories of Lenny

HIGH BLOOD

Constant T. Padilla

SUBIC SECRETOS STREET IN OUR BARRIO, Lenny, Batangas, where I was a little girl was a still a joy to remember. The thrill of the two months every year was always worth the 11 months of waiting.

I remember the Fiesta de Mayo, a month-long nightly orgies in different barangay conducted in honor of the town and in worship for its. My sister and I were excited every night to take part in this beautiful mix of flowers offering to Mama Mary.

Every night, we would be up early in the morning to walk through the small rice-lined streets, calling on almost every house along the way. The town was full of cousins and aunts and we just had to sing, talk a little and partake of something before we went allowed to go to our next.

Of course, the highlight of the Lenny journey was a town of beautiful women probably because the from over Mesa, Philippines, Santa Rosita, came from there.

But why were there so many unmarried elderly ladies? Why be her and this was because the young men had such adventurous options in Lenny. They went for other places and eventually got married there. Either these the fact that the ladies got so engrossed in their work many of them were considered they to get the time.

And yet, further added, in this town once very year, there was a fiesta and during the fiesta many were brought up in the highest Filipino traditions love for this home. Sandy solidarity, industry and strict standards of morality and religion.

There were parties often, but since we were love young in dances, my sister and I just watched the young people and how they danced, how they ate the crispy. Sometimes we were asked to play the piano for intermission. The parents were rather thrilled to have and see the two little girls from Manila. Daughters of their old teachers. Being the center means center the piano.

The children and some cousins were holding five dollar cash in remaining three almost every night. Lenny was a veritable glass room for cousins since the people had sought refuge in the places.

The heterogeneity also will painfully remember. The memory of the Japanese occupation. Townsfolk talk like the native and police chief, as well as other citizens, were killed by assassins. The main crime was established on April 10, 1944 when half of the houses in Lenny were burned.

With liberation came peace, and in the meadows where the refugees hung were mourned and efforts were exerted on making the town as prosperous as before.

Aug. 16 every year is a big day for us, because early years up to the present. This town knew that that date, the novenas, the procession, the Gone to Heaven ceremony to Mama Mary and parties were in village, the "fiesta Reyes" of Lenny.

We never had to attend the novenas and with old friends and relatives we talk of the "good, old times." The recollections to the feelings that are a measure of happiness, sadness, fulfillment and longing. Lenny is a place where we have decided to put a hundred acres from the municipal to the old hometown and the pleasure of seeing again the loved faces are in town as ever, reminding me of some lines memorized in my childhood:

And when, one day,
I had left this land of clay,
Let me fly home like a bird.
Amid scenes of childhood,
Where all my heart will be,
There shall I die and be buried
In my own native home.

And the memories will be with me always and forever.

Constant T. Padilla is a retired dean of the College of Pharmacy of the Philippine Women's University.

Glaring fact omitted

I FEEL'D #####E MONGOD IN #IGE SYSTEM. She's among the few personalities who rate high in my list of people with unquestionable integrity. Of course, I voted for her in the last national elections. I know she would have been a good senator had she won.

However, her stand on the issues against Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo is baffling me. FPJ, Jr. (8/29/05) Let me cite one issue—the one that started it all—the Hello Garci tape. She, along with the other Gikk supporters and apologists, has been saying (here is absolutely) nothing wrong with this wiretapped conversation between GMA and then Election Commissioner Virgilio Garcillano (but maybe) her impeachment is removed from office. But?

I don't know what kind of analysis she has made out of the taped conversation. Anyway, however one [perhaps, even a grade school student], looks at it, he or she can't lose sight of the fact that something wrong was done and the fact that no less than the President herself did it aggravated the act and made it a "serious" one, enough reason to lose her seat of the presidency, a position that in fact may not even rightfully belong to her, in the first place.

LETTERS

Let her defense of the President, she is overlooking a very glaring fact about the issue, and that is the principal observer himself—Garcillano—the one who should say that no fraud had been committed, is in hiding. (In fact actually.) Is it in the sense of a monster who is innocent?

If Garcillano is guilty, then it follows that the conversation that GMA had with him is not a simple case of "lapse in judgement." Why would Garcillano hide? Why would he escape from the country? Aren't the answers obvious? But why is Mrs[illegible] not seeing it (her way)?

The Hello Garci tape proves that a gross misconduct has been committed by the President. This should be simple enough to see for even the most astute Gikk supporter.

—RENATO SUBRIDO,
benj_lab@yahoo.com

People's Court will give predetermined verdict

THE IDEA OF INSIDE A PEOPLE'S COURT TO try the President is a whole crock of nonsense. No reasonable person would expect this so-called court to hand down a verdict other than what its distinguished members have been accidentally dictating from the President. Or her to stop doing.

To say that it is not a kangaroo court is to insult the common sense of the Filipino people. For the accepted politicians to push us into the brink [with endless and non-innovative promotings and media noise] is one thing, to insult our intelligence is just taking too much.

Let's hear the call of the President to move on and roll up our sleeves. Economic and job opportunities are being lost right now because of political tension.

—JOSEF BELLA FERRE,
Baguio City
arpidelaserra@yahoo.com

Moving on

VOICES ON INQ7.NET

The nation continues to be divided on the issue of Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's legitimacy. The good news, however, is that more and more Filipinos are looking within to solve the impasse.

GLORIA MACAPAGAL ARROYO IS circling the wagons. She would prosecute the cat-trap witch her life hostile, and government can go hang. She's using all four aspects to save her embattled high office, trampling on the constitutional rights of Filipinos. The whole world knows that she did send the presidency votes. Gloria remains a clear and present danger to Philippine democracy. If she's allowed to stay in office longer.—Virgilo E. Balcolgan, 30-09 Holbert Sit., Woodside, NY 11377

* * *

Filipinos love their movie stars! Not me.

And many find out of shit... the have lot more important things to attend to than continue our stupid behavior.

A people's court! That's nonsense...only for the idle. Go read a good book. You will probably learn something.—Ramon S. Rocha, Hacienda Heights

* * *

The Christians claim to run in a tradition created by equally corrupt members of the opposition, including whom leftist groups. Let's pass the scrap with them. For as long as we adopt "Cory's version of democracy" nothing can legally remove the President. The impeachment proceedings failed.

Let's face the cruel respective desire as ordinary citizens... Let the politicians talk and talk against each other. Before you do anything, ask yourself: Is this good for my country now?—Benjamin Alimurung Jr. mumar_81@AOL.com

* * *

Filipinos are an intelligent people. We must focus on the good things, stop fighting with each other, support each other.—Florence Martinez, [illegible]@aol.com

* * *

Let everyone step off the "dot dolor" and join the more productive work. The election was over a long time ago. Let's move on. There are more important things in life than whether GMA stays in office or not.—Sheila T. Ramos, SHRAMOS @aol.com

* * *

The media have a big role to play here. The people have their opinion based on what they read or hear in media. I hope media will be more responsible. Enough of political rants... Accentuate the positive.—Miguel Buenaventura, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

* * *

Where we are now is really a difficult dilemma. Is this how we pay the sacrifices and the blood shed by our heroes in order to live us from bondage?

...Out a series of inquiries, lays, threats and immoral leaders relieve the people's anger and distrust for power and love. The hunger for power, immorality and lack of discipline have sapped our vigor and imperiled our democratic form of government. The more we talk democracy the more we become undemocratic. The more we talk the truth, the more the results become distorted.

How can we move on without a clear conscience? Our country now partially needs a new kind of discipline, unity, morality and the fear of God.

We have to reexamine ourselves sincerely. Our problems are not triggered by the opposition but by our complacency and neglect of the essential elements to true democracy. ...We have had so many resignations events that once gave us a promise of redemption but we finished that promise in process and here we are again in search of something new.

...We can still reclaim ourselves from wretchedness and we still have to make from within.—Nicolas Manzala, 3 Greenmeadows Subdivision, Quezon City (via e-mail)

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Less VAT from poor

THE SENIOR DE[illegible] agrees partly with the first 3 [illegible] arrested ("Pensacola" [illegible]). Theoretically, if you board a public jeep that goes 5 km per hour, the [illegible] maximum fare of P0.50 (20 persons of the current approximate rate of diesel) is shared by as many as 10 passengers.

This is a 20-cents-a- increase. [illegible] plus by-taxi for the [illegible] trip.) And the [illegible] one is clueless as the provinces where the majority of the poor live. Unit business owners, the less he/she is affected by the VAT. Those who live in the city and use as hotels and [illegible] restaurants will likely pay much more VAT.

Juan is a teacher in a Class-I municipality in a province. He and the family take a passenger jeep [illegible] every week. Pays in marketing in a small town more that does not care about VAT. They pay [illegible] VAT on the dishes and on the store where they buy clothes. Food is ZERO-rate. How much VAT do you think Juan pays every month, all [illegible]? P40?

Aling Tess is [illegible]. His family owns a P20,000-a-month apartment, drives a P1-million car that he changes every few years, spends P3,000 per month on gas, dines at the restaurants, watches cockfights regularly, the wife and children spend freely on shopping sprees. Juan laughs [illegible] Aling Tess's family contributes to VAT collections annually.

Tess shows Aida's spending capacity and habits to a typical [illegible] employee making a mere savings of, say, P15,000 (less than the wife's or a sibling's earnings) and will say that Aida's family and very much will make it as the mulls and big [illegible].

It is true, there will be fewer thefts than now, but on the average, the government's arguments are valid. I am not a government employee or official, or a politician. Just a plain [illegible].

—JOSE OKINLEY,
jamsan@aol.com

Across the NATION

18-yr-old woman reb's body found in Leyte

By Joel Retuta
The Visayan Bureau

BAGANGA CITY—Farmers on Tuesday found the body of an 18-year-old female rebel near the site of last week's encounter between Scout Ranger's Army 803rd guerrilla and soldiers in Barangay Maslog in Baybay Leyte.

Maj. Jose Lito, executive officer of the 83rd Infantry Battalion, identified the rebel as Marlette Opo, alias Gaying of Maslog, Leyte.

Lito said Opo was the niece of Eddie Opo, one of two NPA rebels captured during the encounter between soldiers and 30 guerrillas near the cemetery in Maslog on Oct. 5 and 6 Day.

Marlette was 17 years old when she joined the NPA, mainly because her relatives in Barangay San Juan in Maslog, a rebel-influenced area, were supporters of the underground movement, said Lito.

She was captured when she was 16 after she was wounded in an encounter with soldiers in 2003. She was given medical treatment before she was turned over to the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD).

The DSWD sent her back to school at San Juan Elementary School in Maslog-big. But a year later, she disappeared and the military assumed that she returned to the movement.

Lito said the farmers found Marlette's body in Barangay Maslog when it started to rot and smelled bad.

The farmers brought the body to the police station in Baybay, 20 km from Barangay Maslog.

Authorities said Gaying rebels abandoned Marlette after she died of a gunshot wound in the stomach.

An Army soldier was slightly wounded during the encounter.

Lito said the rebels were using the bodies of their dead-but-loved ones when they spotted the approaching soldiers.

He said the rebels fled at the soldiers, forcing a government troops. A 20-minute gunfight followed, after which the rebels retreated to the mountains.

NATIONAL ISSUE
Bagobo-tribesman Jun-Jun Pay against six US servicemen accused of raping a student in Subic, under the watchful eye of a billboard featuring a Brave Gun impersonating Robin Padilla.

Gov't urged: Close Lafayette mine now

LEGAZPI CITY—Church and civic leaders of the inland municipality of Rapu-Rapu called for a permanent stop to the operations of mining firm Lafayette Phils. Inc. following a mine waste spill that leaked cyanide into the town's bodies of water.

Fr. Felino Beganiano, Rapu-Rapu assistant parish priest and coordinator of the environmental group Bagtik Ma, said the suspension by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources of Lafayette's operations came "a little too late."

"It's starting to bring bad progress or economic growth ... but destruction to the rich and bountiful island of Rapu-Rapu and the lives of the local folk awaiting near the 1.44-hectare mining area," Beganiano said.

He said the island was no stranger to the effects of irresponsible mining.

He said in the 1980s, a Japanese mining firm left the area after 15 years of operations, leaving the municipality contaminated with mining wastes and three of four rivers biologically dead.

He said the same could happen in Lafayette.

Lafayette's operations were suspended after they leak, Rhino and Goat environs Bureau (MGB) regional director, said there was unauthorized discharge of wastes from the mine's tailings pond, which contained cyanide.

But Juan ordered only the tailing, not the entire mining operation, stopped.

"The open pit operation ... still will continue, as it is not suspended," said Juan.

Beganiano, however, said DENR officials may not be telling everything.

He said that on Oct. 11, the MGB darted the spill across a mine incident.

Clemente Bautista Jr., convenor of another environmental group Defend Tomorrow, said in a phone interview that his group interviewed residents and found that the existing operation did not have their consent.

"What's happening in Rapu-Rapu is similar in a way to the infamous Marcopper mining operations in Marinduque that resulted in destruction that was beyond imagination," said Bautista.

Dr. Domingo Vergara, Rapu-Rapu District Hospital chief, advised residents to refrain from buying and eating fish and other edible marine products as wastes contaminated arsenic, fell 19 metric drowned, PIO Stanford Gamot Barrera and Blanche Rodriguez, in Bicol.

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Benguet execs say dog meat eating is a right

LA TRINIDAD, Benguet—Officials here would like to emulate supporters moves to amend a national law on animal welfare to broaden the respect for the practice of indigenous communities that involved animals.

The review of the 1998 Animal Welfare Act (Republic Act 8485), they said, could involve the possibility of recognizing the sale of dog meat in eateries and restaurants to legitimate business provided it is done in the Cordillera.

The Benguet provincial board this week passed a resolution reminding the Department of agriculture and law enforcement agencies that the rights of indigenous peoples to practice customs for ritual practices have been incorporated in RA 8485.

But the board said these rights had been often violated by investors who, in the past, had raided eateries selling dog meat without coordinating with the proper agencies.

In the resolution, the board members said the native practice of killing animals in the Cordillera has, in a certain extent, become commercialized and "has become an inevitable economic necessity in the people's way of life."

However, it has been observed that local establishments engaged in the sale of dog meat had become victims of raids despite their compliance with the requirements of RA 8485, the resolution said.

"These raids effectively undermine the local economy while denying the people of their age old practices," it said.

In September, members of the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group (CIDG) raided the Cordillera Eatery here and seized 44 dogs and an undetermined quantity of dog meat.

"We believe that the raid was improper because it was done without coordinating with the proper authorities," Board Member Jun Agpas, a lawyer, said.

He said under RA 8485, the CIDG should have first coordinated with the DA's animal welfare committee before conducting the raid.

"Lawmen could not just confiscate dog meat or raid establishments in the guise of implementing the animal welfare law," Agpas said.

Board Member Inin Cupas said the sale of dog meat is not a disrupting when done in accordance according to the Cordillera.

"The consumption is understood to be an offshoot of our cultural practices," he said. *Delmar Cariño, PIA Northern Luzon Bureau*

Police sue ex-judge for shooting young man

KIDAPAWAN CITY—A former municipal trial court (MTC) judge found himself on the other side of the fence when police filed charges against him at the MTC for the shooting of an 18-year-old man on Saturday in Barangay Poblacion Dragon in Matalam town, Cotabato.

But former judge Lucky Gocolay, 58, denied he shot Randy Flores, saying he did not own any firearm.

SPO2 Filomon Guillen Jr., acting Matalam police chief, said Flores and his two companions were playing with firecrackers in front of Gocolay's house.

He said Gocolay went out of his house and asked the youths to stop playing with the firecrackers.

There a burst of gunfire was heard and Flores fell to the ground while his friends ran away.

The victim suffered a gunshot wound in the leg. *Felipe Calleja, PDI Visayas Bureau*

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Ecija welcomes Palparan

PALAYAN CITY—As left-wing organizations continue to call Maj. Gen. Jovito Palparan Jr., commander of the Army's 7th Infantry Division, as a "berdugo (executioner)" of activists, provincial officials and civic leaders welcomed him Tuesday as a "kadugo" (related by blood).

Board Member Edward Thomas Joson, president of the Nueva Ecija Blood Council Foundation Inc. (NEBCFI), said with the "kadugo" title given to Palparan, the general is expected to literally give his blood for Novo Ecijanos.

PALPARAN

Palparan was named consultant of the blood council on Tuesday. As consultant, he is expected to be among those who will lead voluntary blood donations for Novo Ecijano patients needing transfusion.

Palparan, however, failed to donate blood in a NEBCFI activity on Monday as he had just undergone tooth extraction.

But he brought along at least 150 Army officers and men to donate blood.

Joson said the NEBCFI solicits blood monthly to ensure a steady supply for patients in the province. ***Anselmo Roque, PDI Central Luzon Desk***

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German Greenpeace member …

From page A1

with the activists who chose instead "to resort to disruptive tactics to have its message delivered."

A New Zealander and two Filipinos were also injured when they were hit by canoes hurled by the guards, Greenpeace said.

German Jorn Cowan, 35, was beaten and hit with a crowbar to the face and head while he was on the ground, according to the group.

It is post-traumatic, Sapocor detailed some of the activists were manhandled by its guards.

But no Agence France-Presse photographer at the scene said Cowan was repeatedly hit with a crowbar and was later carried away on a stretcher and taken to a hospital in Manokwari. His condition was not immediately known.

SECURITY GUARDS at Pindstoc order two Greenpeace activists out of the premises. They also fired warning shots and pulled the "activists'" with knives. AFP/CY JOVE

Barrels, rubber boats

Sapocor said a pulley report indicated that about 20 activists "in orange coveralls and helmets retrieved unmanned barrels and rubber boats retrieved in the plant at different points along the perimeter fence and the small craft were used and tried to forcibly enter using ladders and rubber floor mats."

Some of the activists were able to enter a highly restricted area and climbed the coal silos, according to Sapocor.

It said plant personnel are ready to provide the activists to come down from the silos after nearly two hours of negotiations.

"When they still refused to leave the premises, a frontal organizer ensued between the illegal activists and the plant guards which led to a scuffle. Cooler heads prevailed and the non-planners were later prevailed upon to withdraw and leave the premises," Sapocor said.

"One trespasser, complaining of chest pains probably due to the stress of climbing the coal silo, requested to be brought to the nearest hospital. The rest of the group were turned over to the Manokwari police station. Identification revealed that the illegal entrants were composed of Filipino and foreign nationals."

Senior Supt. Edgardo Ladao, Zamboanga police director, said eight policemen of the Manokwari police detachment responded to the call for help by plant guards.

Ladao said charges of trespassing would be filed against the Greenpeace activists.

Disproportionate

But Greenpeace energy campaigner Red Constantino said the "violent response was disproportionate to the peaceful nature of the activity."

Authorities should have observed maximum tolerance since the plant, which was built by the government in 1996 amid protests, was completed illegally, he said.

"We were anticipating to stage a peaceful protest in the Manokwari coal power plant when a number of ground personnel became very violent and began to throw stones," Constantino told AFP.

"Guardsmen were also fired from office and one of our activists was repeatedly hit in the face and boxed with a steel bar while he was immobile on the ground," he said.

"We did not have a permit [to enter the compound] but the issue of climate change is of utmost urgency and this prompted us to enter the plant."

Mapocor reluctant

Sapocor, however, said Greenpeace had placed the operations of the power plant at risk.

"The power plant is a high-security risk area and its operations should be protected. Manokwari is one of the major power plants in the Luzon grid that supplies power to Metro Manila and to the entire island of Luzon. In a baseload power plant, it runs continuously here morning to night, seven days a week, and serves as one of the grid's backbones for power generation," it said.

"Not only did Greenpeace expose plant operations to risk, but more importantly, it placed its own people's security and safety at risk, as well as those of our plant personnel."

Sapocor said the Manokwari plant had been complying with international and local environmental standards for emissions.

Double trouble

It was the second time in two weeks that Greenpeace found itself in trouble in the Philippines, after its flagship Rainbow Warrior accidentally struck a coral reef while on a mission to expose the impact of climate change in Asia. The group later apologized for damaging the reef. Report is by Yoselito Ordoñez, PDI Central Luzon Desk; AFP and AP

World's largest bloom

From page A1

name of the barangay where the species was found until it comes to a conservation program for the species had been adopted by the town in consultation with government agencies such as the Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

He feared people might troop to the forest and accidentally destroy the fragile flower, its buds or the vine where the parasitic flower attaches to.

4th species found in RP

If recognized, the R. magnifica will be the fourth Rafflesia species to be found in the Philippines.

The R. manillana—reported as the smallest known Rafflesia with flowers 15 cm to 20 cm in diameter—can be found in Luzon (most prominently on Mt. Makiling in Laguna) and Mt. Isarog in Camarines Sur), Samar and Leyte.

The R. schadenbergiana was discovered in Mt. Apo in Davao in 1881 but has never been seen again, while the R. speciosa can be found in the Siboltan Natural Park in Surigao.

"Once recognized, the newly discovered species could be regarded as the Philippines' largest living flower since the other species, the R. schadenbergiana, is probably already extinct," said Madulid.

Compared with the R. schadenbergiana whose flower measures around 80 cm to 1meter, the new species measures between 60 cm and 70 cm in diameter.

The only bigger Rafflesia species is the one found in the forests of Sumatra in Indonesia. The R. arnoldii produces a flower up to a meter wide.

"But it can be tricky to catch one in bloom, much more measure it," Madulid said.

"For most of the year, Rafflesia remains in their bud stage, which lasts to about a year. Furthermore, not all buds develop to maturity and when they do, these pale creamy orange flowers survived only lighter-colored blotches] usually last less than five days."

Public attention in 2003

The extension of the unidentified Rafflesia species was first brought to public attention in 2003 when Mayor Moran Hotvinsky featured the flower on her television program.

"It is not identity was unknown then. When Lorenzo Tan, a wildlife enthusiast and now director of the World Wildlife Fund Philippines established our office, we organized a team and went to Sitangkaan in Siltan to look for the flower and identify it," Madulid said.

Initial surveys on the ecology and population biology of the new species have been conducted by the National Museum and De La Salle University, Manila.

Named after Sir Raffles

If accepted for publication, details of the discovery will be published in the 2006 issue of Blumea, the international horticulture classification magazine.

The flower got its name from its first European discoverer—Sir Thomas Stamford Raffles, a naturalist and the British colonial administrator who founded Singapore, and botanist Dr. Joseph Arnold.

Raffles and Arnold went on an expedition in 1818 near the town of Bengkulu in Sumatra. The particular species they found was then named Rafflesia arnoldii.

Rafflesia plant

Since then, 29 more species of Rafflesia have been identified. However, scientists believe that some of these are already mature as siphilogs have not occurred for some time.

Besides being the world's largest bloom, the Rafflesia is a very strange and baffling plant.

When in bloom the flower gives off a nasty smell similar to that of a dead rat, attracting carrion flies which pollinate the plants. for pollination to occur, a male and a female Rafflesia must be blooming at the same time.

"Much more, the Rafflesia has no specific flowering season. It has no roots, stems or leaves. In addition, each flower produces thousands of seeds and these seeds can only germinate if they succeed in lodging in the tissue of the Tetrastigma vine, which entails an unknown factor," Madulid said.

Exclusively on a vine

This is why the Rafflesia is usually found on the forest floor. The flower extends food from the vine by connecting threadlike filaments into its tissue.

"It's parasitism for attaching exclusively to the Tetrastigma part. It explains why the flower is very rare and why we also need to prevent the vine it attaches to," Madulid said.

The curator of the National Museum's botany division has already coordinated with Mayor Antonio Tinong of Marogusan to develop a management strategy for the new plant species.

Two share lead in Samsung tilt

CALAMBA, LAGUNA—TERENCE MACARAEG posted the final hole in race to the lead in a tie with Anthony Fernando after 54 holes of the Samsung Amateur Tour at the Swiss Inn-sure Spain Citywalk Estates course here.

The 13-year-old Macaraeg, the leader in the first two rounds, finished with a 75 while Fernando rallied with a 75 for similar 221 aggregates after three rounds in the windswept Mimosa Regalia Golf Resort Estate.

Organizers had to make a slight correction as the scores after discovering an inputting error that showed Macaraeg scoring a 75 on the second day and not a 77 as initially reported, gave him a four-stroke lead.

It's going to be just a two-man fight in today's final round as the next man in the standings, Renan Sarmiento, was 6 holes behind at 149. He was a 77 while Jong Laguardia the next two teams were three holes behind to a 151 for 149.

The tourney is also sponsored by Tokyo Tokyo, EZG Mineral, Coppertone Sport, Sirkus, Philippine Airlines in the official carrier, Bacolod-Murcia Milling Co., Inc., Asia Brewery, Inc., Bank Pacific, Citiland Pilar and Sports Plus Marketing Corp. and Wilcon Depot.

Macaraeg had a 36-hole total of 146 (74-72) to lead Fernando (75-71) by one stroke. Sarmiento (76-73), Joel Agbayani (77-73), Carlos Dag (76-147) and Timothy Salamanca (76-147) while Enrique Cunanan, Raymond Bilbao collapse with a double bogey on the last hole to tie by one.

Bahayan made par for a 100 and 200 total while Baldivino a 104 for 202.

Guba destroys Abadia; De Dios notches upset

JUBIL BIO PHILIPPOT JOMES PARKER GUBA shocked 1st, 5 seed and unseen Jhoby Copper Adolfo Abadia, 6-4, 7-6 in the battle of the Cebu Bay Invitational at the Cebu Bay International Tennis Center.

Guba, a Lo Jude Invitational calendar-athlete who spent his summer training in Cebu, Boy, came back to win both sets after trailing, 1-4, in the first and 2-5 in the second.

In another shocker, Mea Rings De Dios, also a product of Cebu Bay tennis program, overcame No. 7 seed Alex Lazaro, 1-6, 6-2, 6-1.

Top seed P.J. Torres crushed Jessie Monsura, 6-0, 6-0, while No. 2 Johnny Arcilla also encouraged the upset of game skillings with a 6-2, 6-2 demolition of Rocky Pagtakhan. The two of the winners' match for the quarter finals.

In other matches, NF Junior Davis Cuppers Pablo Oliveros Daud Ralph Bacto also fell victim to the upset as in Bro NH Davies prepare-

TIERRO

tions were pursued by Cebuanos Dudley and Lolito Gonzales, 6-0, 6-0, 6-4. Both fell to Libra Manila, 7-6, 7-6, 6-3.

Against No. 8 seed Jose Lapaz also advanced to the quarters by ousting 16-year-old Lorenzo Sison, 6-3, 6-0. No. 3 seed Rolando Biel beat qualifier Ryan Dass, 6-2, 6-0.

"These are the best matches I have seen as mediated in several years, where our new generation is showing great results," said Secretary Boss, Del Consecretal director.

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6:00 pm	Group Exercises by Tribu	Group Exercises by Nautilus		Group Exercises by Tribu	
7:00 pm					Entertainment

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Caloocan City gives reading habit a boost

By Nancy C. Carvajal

ENCOURAGING CHILDREN TO READ MUST not only be the responsibility of school teachers but parents as well.

Carmencita Abel, head of the City's Cultural Affairs and Tourism Office (CATO), said if children were introduced to reading while they were young, they would keep the habit until they grow up.

CATO organized a storytelling and reading session from 2 p.m. on Nov. 10 at the Caloocan City High School gym and on Nov. 15 at the Camarin Elementary School covered court to mark the Library and Information Services month.

"The project was aimed to encourage parents to share the love of reading with their children, especially the younger ones," Abel said.

Noting that several Caloocan barangays were considered depressed areas, the CATO head said poverty should not prevent people from enjoying reading.

Some 500 parents and children from five barangays were invited on the storytelling sessions. "The parents' reading to their children should encourage the habit of reading, not just help the youngsters fall asleep," the CATO head said. "We decided to involve the parents in this program so they would appreciate the value of developing in their children the habit of reading," she added.

Children from barangay day care centers in the two city districts would also be treated to storytelling sessions from 4-5 p.m., Nov. 16, by the Alitaptap Storytellers Club at the city's public library on 11th Avenue.

Though primarily designed to promote creativity, the CATO head said the event also aimed to familiarize the children with the city library. Most Caloocan residents, she said, did not know the city had a library.

"We want to encourage them to explore the library as part of the city's literacy program," Abel said.

MetroBriefs

Busy thieves

POLICE yesterday warned the public to be more careful with their valuables particularly with the approach of the holiday season. "This is the time of the year when criminals are very busy," said Chief Insp. Wilo Salcedo, Northern Police District Chief of Investigation. Caloocan issued the warning after two overseas workers lost their documents and jewelry to robbers in Valenzuela City.

The other day, Police identified the victims as Sylvia Ong and Florbel Ramos who were robbed of their passports, plane tickets, permit to stay and other identification cards. Also taken from the victims' rented apartment in Unit C Copay Compound, Mary-

hill, were assorted expensive watches and jewelry amounting close to P1,000 worth of. The master lord of more than P100,000 and two digital cameras. **Nancy C. Carvajal**

Price monitor teams out

PRICE monitoring teams are out to be deployed to different Manila public markets to protect consumers from overzealous traders taking advantage of the implementation of the Value Added Tax (VAT). City Market Administrator Wilma Cabrera has been tasked to ensure that these teams are regularly formed to conduct random checks not only on prices of basic commodities but also on weighing scales to ensure that consumers get a fair deal when they do business in the city markets. Mayor Lito Atienza said there should be no reason for market traders to take advantage of the VAT by increasing their prices because the rates they pay for the stall, including water and electricity rates, are already subsidized. **TINA C. SANTOS**

AGUSTO

TOGONON

Joey and Ramiro need help

FIFTEEN-YEAR-OLD Joey Agusto wants to get back to school—but he can't. Diagnosed with aplastic anemia, Joey needs three years of treatment. He is currently undergoing blood transfusions and medications at the Dalton Institute, Mandaluyong City. His mom diagnosed with acute lymphoblastic leukemia in January 2002. Joey's parents, farmers and jeepney operators, can barely shoulder the cost of his medicines, which amount to P5,000 per week. Ramiro's family cannot cope with his medical expenses as well. Joey, Ramiro and their families are appealing to kind-hearted souls for financial and medical assistance. Interested parties may contact Joey and his parents at 4260882 and 09194221220 or send their donations through banco de oro at 4460044 or the Metro Trust Bank's mother Ilaya can be reached at 4169021 or 0919-6881080.

Manila orders crackdown on illegal money changers

By Tina C. Santos

THE MANILA GOVERNMENT yesterday warned illegal money changing shops in the city against taking advantage of visitors coming to the city in the coming weeks.

The warning was issued with the expected boom in the money-changing business because of the anticipated arrival of many foreign tourists and overseas Filipino workers for the coming Southeast Asian Games on the third week of November and the Christmas season.

City and police officials said they did not want a repeat of an incident in April when the sale of Kenya's delegate to the Inter-Parliamentary Union was discharged by a money-changing shop in Malate.

Tuh Abdurahman, president of the Association of Authorized Foreign Exchange Buyers of Central Bank of the Philippines Inc., their business had been affected by complaints against illegal money-changers.

He admitted their profits dropped by about 50 percent as clients were prejudiced to go to money-changing shops to other cities.

Abdurahman and several foreign exchange shop owners met yesterday with Manila Mayor Lito Atienza, who vowed to crack down on unscrupulous traders.

He said the mayor directed the Manila Police District to monitor the activities of erring establishments.

"He said he would personally inspect and padlock foreign exchange shops found to be operating without the necessary business permits as well as those short-changing their clients," Abdurahman told reporters.

Meanwhile, the city government ordered the local police force to review security measures in ESEC venues.

The city government issued the order as part of the preparations for the coming athletic event to be held in various parts of the country. Most of the major sports events will be held at the Rizal Memorial Sports Complex in Malate, Manila.

City Hall stepped up security measures to protect athletes and sports officials participating in the 22nd SEAG Nov. 27 to Dec. 5 and hosted by the Philippines. Manila-city officials also ordered a tight search on malls and other shopping areas, as well as other public places that the foreign athletes might visit.

The city officials said additional security checks would be set up, and more security personnel would be deployed in strategic areas.

Lack of warrant aborts police raid

By Tarra V. Quismundo

A TEAM OF THE PHILIPPINE NATIONAL Police Traffic Management Group (PNP-TMG) Task Force Lambat failed to inspect yesterday a garage allegedly storing stolen cars for lack of a search warrant.

Neighbors reportedly said the small car shop owned by Avelino Nieto at 49 Kaulaan Street, Barangay Highway Hills, Mandaluyong City, is engaged in modification jobs.

But Nieto's lawyer, Ramon Jan Pedro, said, "There is no stolen vehicle inside... They are not hiding anything illegal."

The lawyer said a legal team was considering the filing of charges against the PNP-TMG for harassing the Nietos.

Jan Pedro said the PNP-TMG operatives arrived around 9 a.m. yesterday.

"My clients have the police-minded syndrome, for the document had not been issued up to lunch time yesterday.

Jan Pedro said the family's clients could vouch for the legitimacy of the business.

The lawyer said the shop had a permit from the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), although it did not have a business permit from the local government.

Local business licensing officers said the shop would be shut down soon after failing to get a business permit for five years.

The family lawyer said the raid was being remedied.

Nieto's neighbor, Adolfo Ea, couched for the Nietos, saying they were decent members of El Shaddai, a Catholic charismatic group.

CHAT MATES
Two women engage in chop talk on Manila's Roxas blvd. yesterday, unmindful of the bad weather.

Las Piñas City records first car hijack case

By Jocelyn R. Uy

CAR SNATCHERS APPEAR TO have expanded their area of operation to Metro Manila.

Four car thieves struck shortly after midnight on Wednesday in Las Piñas, victimizing a resident of an exclusive subdivision in the city.

The incident was a first in the city, according to police Chief Supt. Avelino Razon, Jr., whose investigation department head of Las Piñas, in a phone interview yesterday.

Sonny Sison, 52, told the police he was on his way home to BF Resort Village in Barangay Talon-Dos at 12:00 a.m. when four armed suspects in a maroon Mitsubishi Lancer flagged him down along Centenary Road, BF Resort Village Boulevard.

The suspects then boarded Sison's Toyota Prado model 2005 with plate number EHR 267.

Sison told the police the men covered his face with plastic, making it difficult for him to recognize the car jackers.

The suspects took his wallet containing his automated teller machine (ATM) and credit cards, as well as his wedding ring, a wristwatch, $400 in cash and a laptop costing P120,000.

Police inspector Hubinor Mendez of Station 4 said the suspects got the victim's Personal Identification Number and withdrew some P70,000 from the ATM using Sison's card.

Sison was dropped off at Sucat Road on Leveriza Street in Pasay City. The suspects then sped off in the victim's speeding utility vehicle, Mendez said.

Razon said the local police was conducting follow-up operations and asked for the community's help in solving the case.

In Quezon City, which has earned the title as the nation's "Car Theft Capital," the police's anti-carnapping unit had already recorded 12 recoverings and five thefts in parked cars this month.

The other day, three suspected car thieves were killed in an alleged shootout with Traffic Management Group (TMG) in the busy Ortigas Center in Pasig City on Monday night. The suspects were identified to Anthony Bella, Francis Xavier Manzano and Aaron Guillermo Gutierrez.

Police said the three were believed to be remaining members of the Wilk Nishi gang, a group involved in car robberies in the late 1990s and in early 2001.

Pet rights protected by new Makati code

By Tarra V. Quismundo

THE MAKATI CITY GOVERNment passed this week a comprehensive ordinance on pet care.

The Ordinance 2006-A-04 or the Makati City Animal Regulation and Control Code would, among others, require pet owners to register their animal companions with the city or house pets.

"The code aims to promote responsible pet ownership and seeks to prevent animal bites and stray animals in public places in the interest of public safety and health," the ordinance stated.

The Makati City Hall said fines of up to P5,000 would be imposed on violators, and their pets would be confiscated.

To be implemented before the end of the year, the code provides guidelines for responsible pet ownership and lists the duties of a pet owner.

Authored by Councilors Felicito Sentinella and Selwyn Pinto, the code limits each household to two adult dogs or three adult cats, unless a special permit is obtained from the City Animal Registry.

The code creates the City Animal Control Facility, a division of the City Veterinary Office, which will monitor an animal dispound, laboratory and impounding area. "The City of Makati believes in upholding animal rights. We believe that animals found on our streets should be a haven for lost, hurt and injured," the council said in a statement.

The ordinance enables the city to license and tag pets for health and sanitary purposes. Licenses, which are required of pet owners, will only be issued if pets have no rabies shots.

Owners shall make sure pets have on their collars or harnesses tags containing required vaccination information. When brought out, pets, particularly dogs, should be leashed.

The council said the ordinance would "prevent animals from becoming a danger to other persons, or from trespassing on the property of others."

Owners are required to keep their animals from defecating on public places and somebody else's property. They are also required to keep their pets as quiet as possible.

The new code penalizes animal cruelty and requires owners to pay for any damage or injury their pets may cause.

METRO
Editor: metro@inquirer.com.ph
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No room for fat policemen in Manila

By Margaux C. Ortiz

THE MANILA POLICE DISTRICT (MPD) Headquarters no longer has room for overweight policemen.

MPD director Chief Supt. Rodolfo Mendoza yesterday launched a special fitness program especially designed for "Manila's Finest."

"Transforming our Manila policemen through physical fitness will create a new breed of cops with increased strength and vigor, which is the key to effective crime suppression and prevention," Mendoza said in a statement.

Police Senior Inspector Mario Lindowal, chief of the Philippine Council for Strength and Fitness Inc. (PCSF) will supervise the MPD's physical fitness program, according to Mendoza.

Lindowal explained that the Manila policemen would be required to undergo arnis self-defense training, weight training, police clinch & counter activities, physical ability tests, fighting fitness for female members of the Special Weapons and Tactics team, bodybuilding, and a 12-week "extensive Tommy Kim strength enhancement system."

The MPD had earlier signed a memorandum of agreement with the PCSF to draft and initiate a fitness program aimed for the Manila policemen.

Mendoza also said that the MPD would be hosting its first championship bodybuilding competition at the Manila Police Academy on Oct. 16.

The competition will be part of a fundraising project to renovate the MPD gym and purchase new equipment and facilities.

"It is police officers will possess the necessary physical, mental and emotional stability to perform police work," Mendoza stressed.

Ali Atienza, head of the Manila City government sports development program, had also pledged to help the MPD build a fitness gym inside the police headquarters.

Safety concerns in Las Piñas gas stations reinforced

By Jocelyn R. Uy

IN A BID TO PROTECT MOTORISTS, THE Las Piñas City Council has drafted an ordinance reinforcing safety measures in gas stations, especially when refueling vehicles.

"The biggest danger posed against the lives of innocent people including consumers and motorists themselves inside a gasoline station is the sudden ignition of fire due to unsafe practices," stated Councilor Rodney Villanueva in his draft ordinance.

The draft ordinance contained the list of acts refueling attendants are by the Department of Energy: no smoking in the premises; no straddling in motorbikes while refueling; outside phones must be turned off as well as the vehicle's engine, and only gas in authorized containers must be sold to customers.

Signages with these precautions, either in Filipino or English, must be put up in conspicuous areas, the draft ordinance said.

Villanueva added that prompt attendance of other personnel must undergo seminars to enhance their skills in handling and inform customers of the safety measures.

The fire department, through its chief officer or his department agents, will oversee the strict implementation of the ordinance.

Violation of any of these measures would entail station owners and managers a fine of P2,000 on first offense. Penalty articulates will be suspended for one week.

A P4,000 fine faces owners and station managers on the second offense, while administrators will be suspended for a month.

Business permits will be revoked on the third offense.

Driving sans license plates cost him plenty

By Margaux Ortiz

DO NOT DRIVE PLATELESS without any license plates.

A lie La Salle University student learned this the hard way when operatives of the Manila Police District (MPD) shot the tires of his Honda CRV after he went against the flow of traffic on Quezon Boulevard following a brief car chase the other day.

Jackson Tan Ong, 23, a BS Computers applications student, now faces charges of reckless driving and damage to property after his CRV rammed into four vehicles including Toyota Vios and Mitsubishi Lancer sedans, according to MPD District Traffic Senior Inspector Jesus Gregorio Lleonart. (CRIME beat logs, George Cadiz).

When IOD operatives stopped Ong for driving his vehicle had no plates at the U-turning Boulevard service around 2:30 p.m., they tried to flag down the CRV to keeping up with the PNP's "no plate, no travel" policy, Cadiz explained.

The police decided to go after Ong when he ignored them, Cadiz said.

Apparently scared, he drove his vehicle toward Quezon Bridge and went against the flow of traffic, damaging four vehicles in the process," Cadiz said.

He explained that the IOD operatives had to shoot the CRV's tires to prevent further havoc.

PSI Dennis Siena of the MPD District 5 added that apart from deflated wheels, the Honda CRV also had bullet holes on its fender. Ong was brought to the MPD Headquarters but was released in the custody of his lawyer early yesterday morning, Cadiz said.

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BUSINESS

Editor Raul O. Marcelo
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First Pacific offers to buy 40% of Del Monte

Hong Kong conglomerate puts up $163M for the acquisition

BELL PEPPERS RING UP A GOOD PRICE: A woman sifts through a sack of bell peppers on sale at the La Trinidad Trading Post in Benguet. The prices of vegetables, mostly from the Cordillera, are reported to have dropped considerably in recent days. All vegetables, save for the bellpepper, which still commands P 100 a kilo. (INQUIRER)

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez and Clarissa S. Ibañez

HONG KONG CONGLOMerate First Pacific Company Limited has offered to buy 40 percent of Singapore-listed Del Monte Pacific Ltd. for $163.6 million.

In a statement yesterday, First Pacific said it has signed an agreement with Del Monte shareholder Citra Financiera S.p.A. and Del Monte Holdings Ltd. to acquire their combined 40 percent block in Del Monte Pacific.

Citra Financiera is Italy's largest canned food company, while Del Monte Pacific is the owner of the pineapple-based brand in the Philippines.

Since 2003, the Citra Del Monte Group has been under "Extraordinary Administration," which is similar to Chapter 11 of the United States Bankruptcy Code.

First Pacific will pay Citra $163.6 million in cash, or 38.16 cents a share, for its 39.72 percent stake. The acquisition is subject to certain conditions.

Manuel V. Pangilinan, managing director and chief executive officer of the Hong Kong-based conglomerate, said the reasons that first Pacific is still on the ground for new acquisitions, even after the acquisition of Del Monte Pacific was proposed.

"I don't think our hands are full yet," Pangilinan said in an interview.

According to Pangilinan, he is now looking at acquiring interests in the food and telecommunications, as well as in infrastructure.

He said there were several investment opportunities in the three sectors across Asia. Some are in the Philippines, where prospects in infrastructure are bright, Metro Pacific Corp., the listed unit of First Pacific, has been pursuing overseas in this sector.

Pangilinan founded the conglomerate in the early 1980s using the capital of billionaire's Indian family.

For Pangilinan, Del Monte Pacific is a very good buy because of its strong presence in China, India and especially the Philippines.

"The acquisition will require some work," he said. "My perception is that the

(MORE B2)

Philip Morris expands capacity in RP

PHILIP MORRIS Manufacturing Inc. has begun expanding its capacity in the Philippines, saying that the implementation of the Sin Tax law last January has not caused a decline in demand for cigarettes.

In fact, Philip Morris is expecting growth in profit this year, although it may be slightly less than the 20 percent year-on-year growth registered in 2004, the company said.

Chris Bolton, Philip Morris' managing director for the Philippines, told reporters that the company would raise the volume of its production by 25 percent. The would mean an increase of production from 24 billion sticks to 30 billion each year.

The cigarette industry, whose plans is centered in Batangas, expects to finish the capacity expansion by the first quarter of next year.

The company officials said Philip Morris welcomed the Sin Tax law, saying the 5-rial section was friendly to business compared with the earlier proposal to raise the excise tax on all products.

The new Sin Tax law is one of the revenue-raising measures pushed by the Arroyo administration to address the country's fiscal problems.

The law states that for the first year of implementation, the excise tax rate on cigarettes would be 12 percent plus P6.46. Every two years thereafter until 2011, the rate will be 3.6 percent plus P0.36. For alcohol products, the tax rate is 20 percent

(MORE B2)

NSO: September exports dropped 1.2%

By Michelle V. Remo

THE COUNTRY'S EXPORTS dropped 1.2 percent in September from the previous year primarily due to the weakening decline in global demand for electronics and the lingering oil problem.

The National Statistics Office yesterday reported that merchandise exports stood at $3.099 billion in September compared with the $3.649 billion recorded during the same month last year.

The September exports data was a reversal of the 0.6 percent growth registered in August. But the NSO said it has no conclusion basis, the January-to-September exports figure still registered a slight growth of 0.4 percent to $29.958 billion from $29.963 billion during the same period last year.

The government has set a target of an 8 percent exports growth this year. But the uncertainty about increase in oil prices has continued economists that this goal is no longer realistic.

High oil prices forced consumers to cut down on spending for non-basic items like electronics, the country's major export product.

NSO data showed that electronics exports fell by 2.1 percent to $2.423 billion in September, reversing the 1.2 percent year-on-year growth recorded in August.

Benjamin Diokno, economics professor from the University of the Philippines, said that there are two main concerns threatening the country's export performance. One is the emergence of China and Vietnam as electronics exporters, thus saving up the share of the Philippines in the global market. The other is the strengthening of the peso against the US dollar.

While some analysts may welcome the recent strengthening of the peso to 54 to a dollar level, Diokno said it would further hurt the export sector because it would make Philippine products more expensive to foreigners. He said keeping the peso between 55 and 56 to a dollar would be a healthy level for the export sector, he also said it would not be bad for the economy as a whole.

(MORE B2)

Senate opposition threatens Napocor assets sale

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Ban on cross-ownership of generation and transmission businesses proposed

By Abigail L. Ho

DANGLE

THE PRIVATIZATION OF THE NATIONAL Power Corp. may face further delays if a proposal to totally ban cross-ownership of generation and transmission businesses will be imposed.

Opposition Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile has filed Senate Bill No. 1929, which seeks to amend RA 9136, or the Electric Power Industry Reform Act of 2001 (Epira), and prohibit distribution utilities from making investments in power generation.

The proposed bill aims to prevent "unreasonable dealings" between power generators and distributors.

Under Sec. 45 of the Epira, cross-ownership may exist between power producers and distributors, but distribution utilities may not source more than half of its total demand from its affiliates.

The law sets the cap to ensure transparent comparison of supply contracts between affiliates and other independent power producers (IPPs) that cater to the same load curve.

But instead of boosting the industry, the proposed bill may just further delay the Napocor privatization process and even prevent local investors from putting up new power plants, said Ramon Diamzon, executive director of the Private Electric Power Operators Association (Pepoa).

In a briefing yesterday, Diamzon said that under the current scenario, local investors with enough financial muscle to participate in the Napocor privatization process also have stakes in power distribution firms.

Such investors include the Lopez group, which operates the Manila Electric Co. and First Generation Holdings Corp., and the Aboitiz group, which owns several power generation and distribution firms all over the country.

A cross-ownership ban, Diamzon said, would discriminate against local investors.

Since foreign firms may not engage in power distribution, unless they are working with Filipino partners and controlling not more than 40 percent of the voting equity, these firms may be the only ones likely to acquire Napocor's yet-to-be-auctioned generation assets, Diamzon explained.

"Now, in order to make the field wide open for foreign investors because you're prohibiting local investors from coming in," he said.

Because the number of prospective investors has been whittled down, Napocor's assets may command lower than-expected prices, he said.

"Now, the cross-ownership ban may increase the market power of the dominant supplier which, at this time, happens to be Napocor, he said.

Smaller power distributors, particularly those in the provinces, likewise stand to lose from the cross-ownership ban as they may be left without power to supply to their franchise areas.

Diamzon said some small distribution utilities that had already invited generation firms to bid for their power demand had received one even a single bid. One firm in Mindanao received only one bid—it came from its affiliate generation firm.

"If there is cross-ownership, there will always be an option for the distribution utility if it switches supplier is narrowed," he said.

First Pacific offers to buy . . . From page B1

company is diversely run, which wouldn't involve so much work, unlike Pldt (Philippine Telephone Corp., a unit of the Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co.)."

Pangilinan is touted as having the "Midas touch" in the corporate sense after he transformed the near-moribund telecoms like Pldt and, recently, Metro Pacific Corp., as well as its unit Negros Navigation Co.

First Pacific has received fresh funds after the sale earlier this year of its $200-million five-year zero coupon bonds, which may be turned into PLDT shares.

First Pacific has a 24-percent stake in PLDT. The company has also considered JP Morgan Chase to arrange debt that would help it finance the acquisition of additional Del Monte shares in line with the tender offer for the remaining shareholders of Del Monte.

"We can handle the financing of the Cam-

stake," Pangilinan said. "So the debt that we have considered JP Morgan to arrange will depend on the level of interest on the tender offer."

Should First Pacific be successful in buying Cirtek stake sometime in January, it will be required to conduct a conditional cash offer to the remaining voting securities shareholders of Int'l Semiconductor Pacific and eventually take over the company.

Del Monte Pacific runs one of the world's largest fully integrated pineapple operations and has long-term supply agreements with other Del Monte trademark owners and licensees around the world.

If First Pacific succeeds in acquiring full ownership of Del Monte Pacific, it is expected to align certain aspects of Del Monte's businesses with the Salim-led PT Indofood Sukses Makmur Tbk, the world's largest instant noodles manufacturer.

First Pacific owns a 51.5 per cent stake in Indofood.

NSO: RP September . . . From page B1

"The Philippines' export sector is very sensitive to the developments in the world economy because, if oil prices rise, electronics will be taxed out in consumption," Dakila said.

Dakila said the country's export sector could still post gains in the last quarter of this year, but the best it could muster was a 4-percent full-year growth.

Following electronics in the list of top exports were articles of apparel and clothing accessories, accounting for $202.17 million of the total exports figure and reflecting a 5.3-percent growth from the $191.59 million a year ago.

Other top exports were petroleum products, $74.63 million; ignition wiring sets and other wiring sets used in vehicles and ships, $63.48 million; other products manufactured from materials imported on consignment basis, $47.26 million; coconut oil, $46.34 million; footwear and furniture, $36.81 million, and metal components, $29.86 million.

The biggest market for Philippine exports was the United States, accounting for $653.65 million of the total export bill. Other top export destinations were Japan, $628.23 million; Netherlands, $374.16 million; China, $290.69 million, and Singapore, with $265.32 million.

Philip Morris expands . . . From page B1

for the initial year. The will be raised to 6 percent every two years thereafter until 2011.

The law was a watered-down version of the original proposals.

"Clearly, SB 1231 ensured sustained revenue generation for the government while providing a moderate and regular tax increase acceptable to the cigarette industry," Nelson said in a speech before members of the non-Ortanez Tax Coordinate Association during their annual meeting held yesterday in Makati.

Nelson noted that the cigarette industry would have suffered from substantially reduced demand if old plans of bolstering the excise rates to ineffective were pursued.

Philip Morris International, the mother company, said it has a 13-percent share in the global cigarette market. It produces leading cigarette brand Marlboro.

The company said it has interests in, or operates, more than 50 factories around the world. Its products are sold in more than 160 markets.

Michelle V. Remo

Shares close little changed From page B1

The market rallied in recent days after the government finally implemented the long-delayed expanded value-added tax (VAT). It remains to see if the measure is needed to avoid a looming fiscal crisis.

The Philippine Stock Exchange composite index rose 3.84 points to 2,099.14 after trading between 2,089.30 and 2,115.66 points. Volume was 972 million shares worth P1.04 billion ($18.53-million).

Gainers led losers 69 to 30, with 41 stocks unchanged.

The all-shares index rose 3.30 points to 1,268.77.

The Philippine peso was at 54.789 to the dollar as of mid-day.

"Profit taking has set in," said Lawrence de Leon of Secured Capital Equities Inc. "This has been expected, given the strong gains over the past few days."

Bank of the Philippine Islands, the most actively traded stock, was up 50 centavos at 51 pesos.

Philippine Long Distance Telephone added five pesos at 1,655 pesos.

Manila Electric Co.'s B shares, available to local and foreign investors, fell 50 centavos to 22 pesos while its A shares, exclusive to locals, retreated 25 centavos to 34.50 pesos. AFP

Gokongwei offers tan-talizing fares

COCKTALES

Hector C. Agnavlo

[illegible] GOKONGWEI'S AIRLINE has unleashed its Valentine promotion in the Luzon Tan sale—P1,000 to P2,000 price cuts for all off-peak domestic fares.

The Cebu Pacific offer, which starts as low as P699 for Manila to Bicol (a typical five-percent one-way fare of P2,149), is available all year round on a first-come, first-served basis starting today.

Cebu Pacific president Lance Gokongwei said the airline has also saved about 30 percent of total capacity, or about a million seats in all, for the holidays.

The airline's game plan is to increase load factor, which went down to 62 percent this year from 2004's 78 percent because of the year's high fuel prices, to 75 percent for the year.

Initially available through the airline ticketing offices and select travel agents, the Tan fares should be available worldwide on e-bookers and buy fares on the Internet starting tomorrow, thus making them available even to holidaymakers, said Rene Hopkins, Cebu Pacific general manager.

The airline's initial deliveries of new Airbus 319 planes have drawn encouraging results, and have even prompted [illegible] to announce that it too was replacing its aging fleet.

Mejia said Cebu Pacific's load factor for the busy Manila-Davao route was up by 22 percent last month, year-on-year, with the introduction of the new Airbus.

PAL, in answer, fielded bigger planes like the manufacturer Boeing 747-400, A330 and A340 in the same Manila-Davao route, thus offering more capacity. From its aggressive start in 1996, Cebu Pacific has now snatched about 34 percent market share, and aims to dislodge the financially hobbled market leader, Philippine Airlines, by 2009.

It currently has 1,500 employees and 19 aircraft, for an ASK ratio, as against the former state-owned airline, which has 7,000 employees and 30 planes, or a 2:1 ratio.

Gokongwei said the Tan fares would eventually be made available to the airline's regional routes to compete head-on with regional low-cost airlines.

Money-go-round

• THE MANILA Polo Club said it already has a website (www.manilapolo.com.ph) up and running since last month. Strangely, the website could not be found in the Google search.

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ABSOLUTELY NO REGISTRATION FEE

Political woes feared to cap peso appreciation

Bank says investors now focusing on country's economic fundamentals

By Dorie C. Dantes

THE PESO WILL LIKELY DIVERGE to "some tune" appreciation to firm up at the $4.81 level next year on the back of improving economic fundamentals, an assessment by US-based Standard Chartered Bank said.

In an economic briefing yesterday, HSBC Hong Kong-based senior economist Mike Moore said the peso's further ascent, however, could be capped by political uncertainties and the upcoming of the 2006 midterm elections.

"We're still optimistic on the peso. We think it will continue improving in the first half of 2006," Moore said.

He added that the local currency's appreciation would only be limited by the strengthening of the US dollar, which was supported by the tightening of the US Federal Reserve's rates to 4.75 percent by the first quarter of next year.

Moore noted that the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas would have to also raise its interest rates by another 50 to 75 basis points in the first half of 2006 to keep a comfortable interest rate differential as well as to protect its inflation targets.

He said Philippine global bonds had likewise remained attractive to investors abroad as they were beginning to recognize the the fiscal consolidation efforts made by the government.

"We've shown the four undercurrents (investors are again focusing on Philippine economic fundamentals) so there's never a 'positive story,'" he said.

Moore said this did not mean that political uncertainties had been completely wiped out. This, he said, showed that investors were upbeat on current progress in fiscal reforms, especially with the implementation of the expanded value-added tax.

He said the accelerated fiscal consolidation and political stability were reflected in the bank's positive outlook for the country. He said the VAT implementation would boost the domestic economy beyond 2005, thus boosting the country's credit worthiness.

Domestic consumption, which is driven by strong remittances from overseas workers, will be the country's key growth driver in 2006, Moore said.

For next year, the economist expects the Philippines to post a slower growth of 4.5 percent from 4.7 percent. Despite the expected slowdown, he said the projected expansion for next year was still "healthy."

The 4.5 percent growth by gross domestic product projected by HSBC for the Philippines for 2006 was better than the 3.9 percent and 3.9 percent growth outlook for Singapore and Thailand, respectively, but down from the 5.7 percent growth seen for Indonesia and 5 percent for Malaysia.

The country's inflation is seen to accelerate from 5.4 percent last year to 7.3 percent this year. The rate, however, is seen to slow down to 5.3 percent in 2006.

Globally, he said the rising oil prices remained a key risk but noted that the global economy was resilient enough to absorb the adverse impact of the increases.

Improving efficiency of production as well as lower cost of labor and capital within the region, globalization, he said, were leading to low underlying inflation, low real interest rates as well as expansionary fiscal policies.

GSIS 9-mo income up 11%

GARCIA

THE GOVERNMENT SERVICE INSURance Institution System posted an 11 percent increase in its net income to Rs.7bn from quarters of the year.

GSIS president and general manager Winston F. Garcia said the continued increase in the fund's total resources and premium collections from contributors from January to September this year reached P95 billion.

Of the total resources, the GSIS is expected to invest or own regions to P86.66 billion (target net income for 2005), Garcia said.

The GSIS registered a record P80 billion net income in 2004, the highest among all government-owned and controlled corporations. The GSIS is one of the only two government agencies that are posting double-digit profits, the other being Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp. which placed second with a profit of P11 billion last year.

"We are confident that given our strong performances during the first three quarters of this year, the GSIS would easily surpass last year's net earnings by at least 10 percent," said GM Garcia. "This only goes to show that the criteria we instituted on getting off, and we are on track to create the long-term solvency of the GSIS fund."

Should the GSIS hit or surpass its P86 billion net income goal for the year, it would be the highest annual net income in the 68-year history of the government pension fund, said Garcia.

Among the reforms undertaken by the GSIS were the premium-based policy and the claims and loans interdependency policy or CLIP introduced by the GSIS board of trustees.

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BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE
Legazpi City

INVITATION TO BID

We are inviting all interested suppliers to join the bidding for the supply and delivery of various Drugs and Medicines with approved budget for contract amounting to Php 1,000,000.00.

Bid documents may be secured from the BAC Secretariat located at the 2nd floor Administrative Building, Bicol Regional Training and Teaching Hospital, Legazpi City from October 25 – December 7, 2005 after payment of a non-refundable amount of Php 1,000.00.

The pre-bid conference is scheduled on November 04, 2005 at 9:00 AM at the Conference Hall, 2nd Floor Surgical Building annex, BRTTH, Legazpi City. Opening of bids will follow shortly after stopping of bids at 9:00 AM on December 9, 2005 at the Conference Hall.

For more information, please call the following numbers (052) 481-1611 loc 1217 or 1218.

The Hospital reserves the right to accept or reject any bid, to waive any defect or annul the bidding process, and reject bids anytime prior to Award of Contract, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidder/s or any obligations to inform the bidder/s of the ground for the action.

(Sgd.) EDPENAMEN R. MENDIOLA, MD
Chairperson

National Marine raises stake in Lorenzo Shipping

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

NATIONAL MARINE CORP. (NMC) SNOWED by shipping heiress Doris Magsaysay-Ho, raised its stake in listed San Lorenzo Shipping Corp. to 42.4 percent by acquiring a 12-percent additional interest in the company.

In a disclosure, NMC said National Marine acquired San Lorenzo's 28.9 million common shares at P1.20 apiece for P34.6 million.

On top of this, National Marine bought an additional 9.3 million or 3.6 percent from the stock market.

All these purchases raised National Marine Holdings in LSC to 41.36 percent from 28.68 percent.

National Marine earlier offered to buy 51.3 percent of LSC for P105.2 million. The offer period ended on Oct. 26.

NMC is a local shipping company engaged in inter-island and regional trade.

It maintains operations in container shipping, petroleum hardening and bunging, LPG water transport, ship agency, logistics and freighting.

Under SEC regulations, a company is required to make an offer to buy minority shareholders of a publicly-owned company if it has purchased more than 35 percent of that company.

HMC is buying LSC to strengthen its position in the domestic shipping industry.

Founded in 1972, LSC provides inter- & land container/non-cargo shipping services in the country. LSC operates a fleet of eight cargo vessels that operate within a network of seven branches in Cebu, Davao, General Santos, Cotabato, Iloilo, Cagayan de Oro and Manila. With plans to outsource service routes in the future, the company will open marketing offices and expand its network.

Globe Telecom eyes new loans

GLOBE TELECOM INC. WILL SEEK TWO NEW five-year loans before the end of this year to refinance $120 million worth of more expensive debt maturing in 2007 and 2008.

Globe's chief financial officer Delfin Gonzalez said that he refinancing some debts due in two to three years, the company would save P40 million in interest payments over the next two years.

The country's second largest phone company is finalizing a P1.6 billion loan from Citicorp Capital.

It is also considering talks with Bank of Tokyo-Mitsubishi, BNP Paribas, ING Capital, Standard Chartered Bank and Sumitomo Mitsui Bank for a $100-million loan.

Revamping or refinancing debts allow the telco with huge dollar obligations to save on interests, speed up debt reduction and minimize currency risks.

Globe has P6.6 million in outstanding debts. Of this, $20 million is maturing this year, $171 million in 2006, $345 million in 2007, $117 million in 2008 and $409 million between 2009 and 2012.

Gonzalez said the company would continue exploring upsized auction to tighten its debt load, either by refinancing or prepayment, especially if interest rates would rise further.

Globe said it would spend less than $200 million for capital expenditures in 2006, down from $368 million this year.

Gonzalez said the capital investment proposed for next year would cover the initial roll out for the third-generation wireless technology called 3G. He said the company would use internal funds to finance the network expansion in 2006.

The joint venture of media Corp. and Singapore Telecom is taking advantage of a better credit rating Sean Moody's Investors Service and Standard & Poor's to ease its debt load.

Moody's in July upgraded Globe's foreign currency debt rating by a notch to Ba3 from Ba3 after it considered the ownership of Singapore Telecom in the local telco's capacity to pay its debts. S&P recently raised Globe's outlook to positive.

Warmest Congratulations to
Chairperson Fe Barin
her fellow Commissioners
and staff of the

Securities and Exchange Commission
on the occasion of the Commission's
69th Anniversary
today, November 11th 2005.

To our partner in
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Mabuhay po kayo!
from:

PSE
The Philippine Stock Exchange, Inc.

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) invites all interested bidders to participate in the bidding for the Procurement of One (1) Unit Passenger Motor Vehicle with an Approved Budget of P1,400,000.00.

Interested bidders must register by submitting the registration requirements to the Property Division, Administrative Service, 4th Floor DOLE Building, Intramuros, Manila, Philippines, on or before November 21, 2005 (Monday) for registration of bid on November 22, 2005 at 9:00 a.m.

Only bidders duly registered with the PBAC shall be allowed to participate in the competitive bidding activities, to wit:

ACTIVITY	DATE	TIME	VENUE
Pre-Bid Conference	November 23, 2005	1:30 p.m.	Conference Room, 2nd Floor DOLE Executive Building, San Jose Street, Intramuros, Manila
Submission of Eligibility Requirements	November 24, 2005	Before 1:00 p.m. (Effectivity)	same as above
Bid Opening of Bids	December 01, 2005	Before 1:00 p.m. (Effectivity)	same as above

Eligibility documentation shall be distributed during the Pre-Bid Conference at Php 1,000.00 per copy and shall be returned on November 24, 2005 to the Property Division, Administrative Service, 2nd Floor DOLE Bldg., Muralla Street, Intramuros, Manila.

On November 1, 2005 bidders shall submit their eligibility documents on a sealed envelope to the PBAC Desk and likewise indicate the name of the project and the corresponding number as stated in the ITB. ONE (1) PHOTOCOPIED BLACK OR COLOR WITH NO LAMINATING MACHINE and the name of the bidder in capital letters.

Interested bidders are requested submit their bids personally or through their authorized representative, on November 15, 2005. The DOLE reserves the right to reject any or all bids, to waive any defect therein, and to accept the bid most advantageous to the government. Failure to submit bid shall be considered as waiver to the bidder and he or she shall automatically be disqualified from the bidding.

The DOLE reserves no obligation to all bidders based from this ITB to participate in the preparation of bids. All costs in connection with the preparation of bids shall be borne by the bidder.

For further information/clarification, please get in touch with Ms. Lily Pilar L. Guerrero and Mrs. Rhoda L. Ybanez, members of the BAC Secretariat at telephone numbers 527-3650 or 527-3000 local 210 or 229.

(Sgd.) ARTURO L. BAUTISTA
Assistant Secretary and
Chairman, Bids and Awards Committee

Cocktales

- UNILab will launch tonight its Zinc Philippine version of Virgin.

Heard through the grapevine:

MMIC, which owns a total of the Ortigas and Co. limited partnership, is pushing the majority Ortigas heirs to transform the 75-year old partnership into a corporation to capitalize on the business professional management of the profitable real estate company.

(Email: cocktales_philstar@... or cocktales_philstar@...)

ABS-CBN profit down 9% in Q3

San Miguel posts 9-month income of P5.2B

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

SAN MIGUEL CORP. POSTED a NET INCOME of P5.23 billion in the first nine months of the year, down by 6.1 percent from year-ago's P5.57 billion.

Sources said this was due to high financing charges as some that were used to acquire a stake of Australian dairy Bonlac Foods Ltd.

Financing charges amounted to P5.26 bil. lion, 70% of this, net income would have increased by 1 percent.

In a report to the Philippine Stock Exchange, SMC said its consolidated revenue grew 32 percent to P261 billion from year-ago level.

However, the rising costs of raw materials, packaging and additive hampered gains in operating income to P12.2 billion, 9 percent higher than last year. Feedstock's commodities, SMC chief finance officer, told investors in a briefing yesterday.

The beer-based conglomerate earned P5.88 billion in the first half's 6 the year.

Sources said local beer sales more the elevating the nine-month period for revenues rose up 13 percent.

Sales were recorded in SMC's domestic two operations, which generated P5.79 billion in

CONTINUED

By Clarissa S. Batino

STILL IN SEARCH OF A PROGRAM THAT will improve its ratings, ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp. yesterday reported a 9-percent drop in its third quarter income to P304.9 million from P334.6 million in the same period in 2004.

The company's nine-month profit stood at P944 million, 51 percent down from P754 million a year ago. Company officials said that while the hit reality show Big Brother had been watching ebbing ratings, it still was not the show that would boost the network's profitability.

The Ang Pamilya Ninyo, together with Big Brother, may however help steer the long-awaited turnaround of the Lopez-owned network, which used to be the industry leader in terms of ratings and profits.

Rolduglo Lim Jr., the network's chief financier officer, said the company would do better. There is no urgent need, he said, for ABS-CBN to re-capture the prime time ratings from the rival network.

He is, however, hoping that next year will be a different story for the giant broadcast firm, which is slugging behind fierce rival GMA Network Inc. in terms of profits and ratings. GMA is expecting more than P2 billion in net profit this year.

During the current quarter, ABS-CBN is still suffering from a decline in advertising amounts of about 10 percent from a year ago.

"As long as our ratings are lower, it will be difficult to catch up," said Rolduglo. "Big Brother is expected to be a major contributor in moving forward but while it is rising, it is not hitting the 40 percent target yet." The reality show is a 30 percent average rating.

The strong performance of ABS-CBN Global Ltd. helped the company's revenues and helped offset a 3-percent drop in local airtime revenue. Interlink said the network for 24 overseas permanents ears in the United States market and would like to grow that to 40 percent in five years.

The global unit has clinched a deal with Australia firm DirecTV where it received fees for the transfer of its existing customers to the US. So far, the fees from the deal were at P545 million.

ABS-CBN Films and Star Records registered losses.

The company's expenses rose by 12 percent to nine months, inclusive of non-cash expenses, especially those related to sub-cuts, accounting rules, Rolduglo.

The finance executive said the company laid off about 400 employees this year. The streamlining will give ABS-CBN about P350 million in savings each starting 2006.

"We can't do much more in terms of expenses without hitting the bones," said Rolduglo.

The finance chief said that 2006 should be a better year for the network. All the ingredients, he said, were present already especially on the issue of cost management.

"This year woke up up and had just to do a lot of things. I won't say it was a failure," he said. "It was an industrial as a lot of noise."

China Bank, partner going into dollar remittances business

By Doris C. Dumlao

CHINA BANKING CORP. IS VENturing into the overseas Philippine remittance business through a tie-up with California-based East West Bank, the second largest independent commercial bank in Los Angeles.

Through this partnership to cash transfer service, Filipinos and any other interested parties in the US can send money through the branches of East West Bank in California (not related to the local bank owned by the Gotianuns).

The funds will be received by the OFWs' families and relatives in the Philippines through any of China Bank's 140 branches and 200 automated teller machines nationwide, or through door-to-door delivery services.

"This partnership allows for a less expensive and safer way of sending money to and from abroad," said China Bank executive vice president Ricardo Chua.

According to the National Statistics Office, more than 3.1 million households in the Philippines depend on remittances. We hope to serve their remittance needs through this partnership," he said.

East West Bank International Banking SVP Brock-Sie Chong added: "China Bank and East West Bank have the same market niche and together, our clients can benefit much from our combined expertise and service offerings."

The California-based East West Bank is a full-service commercial bank serving retail and corporate clients and has 16 locations in the US and a representative Office in Beijing, China. It is also one of the largest financial institutions in the US focusing on the Chinese-American community.

China Bank, founded in 1920, posted a 7.7-percent increase in net income to P2.31 billion as of end-September from a year ago on increased consumer lending, record growth in low-cost funds and substantial gains in treasury and trust operations.

The jacked up the bank's income on average equity to 15.1 percent versus 14.22 percent in the same period last year, one of the highest in the industry. The return on average assets also improved to 2.49 percent from last year's 2.44 percent.

Its capital adequacy ratio of 20.74 percent also made it one of the strongest commercial banks in terms of capitalization.

As of end-September, China Bank's total resources stood at P132.34 billion, 17.5 percent higher than the year-ago level of P112.65 billion.

Implement reforms, HSBC urges gov't

By Bernard W. Dominguez

THE GOVERNMENT NEEDS TO FOLLOW through on its fiscal reform program to prop up confidence among investors without "facing the view of the country is negative."

This was what Dilip Shahani of HSBC's fixed income credit research in the Asia-Pacific told members of the American Chamber of Commerce and industry during its regular meeting held at the Peninsula Hotel yesterday.

"A rapid implementation of (Mahathir's) original tax reforms is necessary to keep investor confidence," Shahani said. "Further time used to redouble efforts to garner public support for fiscal consolidation."

He said the P88 billion in continued revenues from the expanded coverage of the value-added tax were year-one corrections.

Shahani said collection might not be efficient enough to meet the target while government expenses were on the rise.

The official said that on the upside, the country has a well-managed external debt profile supported by a stable inflow from overseas workers.

Beneficiaries from abroad compensates for the lackluster performance of exports, which is "lagging in the region and continue to disappoint."

Exports posted revenues totaling about $40 billion in 2004 and projects to earn about $48 billion this year.

"The lack of capital investment is hurting exports as well as job creation (and this because) policy makers do not provide stability to encourage long-term investment," Shahani said.

He said the status of the government's debt ratios were at "vulnerable levels" while the government revenue to gross domestic ratio of 14.4 percent was "shocking-ly low."

"Interest payments consume an alarming amount of total revenues," Shahani said. "The government needs to spend (more) on infrastructure building, improving education and bolstering social services."

He said another major concern was that the government was "still married to the National Power Corp.," whose debt accounts for the bulk of public sector debts.

"Government finances are still contingent on its ability to recapitalize and privatize the power sector and this is due to the lack of political consistency and discipline to carry out privatization," he said.

Shahani said the government was considered still in the position to provide financial stability to the power sector in the near term.

Shahani said foreign investors were worried about public sector debts' sustainability such that credit rating agencies were keeping current rating critics on profit from Philippine investments.

"Standard and Poor as well as Fitch (are poised to) downgrade the Philippines' rating by one notch to B+ and BB, respectively. If there is backtracking on efforts to improve public sector finances," he said.

Despite this, he said the private sector was humming along with expected growth of last quarter on loan disbursements. Since the property market was still sucrie, the banking sector was on the mend.

San Miguel . . .

Previous B5

come or 11 percent higher than last year's level.

International beer sales were also higher by 1.2 percent with volumes up by 9 percent. However, SMC's packaging business climbed 23 percent while sales from its food business grew 7 percent.

SMC said in a disclosure that double-digit sales revenue growths were registered across its businesses. Income gains were maintained in its international beer operations and in the company's water and juice businesses, as well as in the company's food group which also benefited from better selling prices.

For power, volume growth likewise remained robust, up 15 percent from 2004. Consolidated operating income reached P22.2 billion, nine percent above the year-ago nine-month period.

Contributions from newly acquired businesses (from Ka-ional Foods and juice maker Royal Ltd. president a hefty addition to foreign revenues, which rose by 205 percent or more than triple than that of a year earlier. The consolidation of National Foods began using in June contributed P15.9 billion in revenue and P1.46 billion in operating income as of end-September.

New programs have been set to add momentum to these gains towards the fourth quarter when the company's major products hit peak sales. To boost Philippine beer sales, for instance, SMC set up present link-ups with special events, implemented new consumer promos and launched new brand campaigns to retain the market.

In the liquor business, enhanced growth in Ginebra Masarap brandy is helping Ginebra San Miguel Inc. sales volume in the first nine months of the year.

SMC also said it was requesting the Coca-Cola Beverage Group to review, as progress have been put in place to achieve continuous business process improvement and cost reduction, along with the implementation of trade and consumer marketing programs and new product launches.

BUSINESS

Foreign investments hit $929M as of Aug.

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE PHILIPPINES LURED $929 million in net foreign direct investments (FDI) from January to August this year, 73 percent better than a year ago, on bigger investments by the manufacturing sector.

This allowed the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas to meet its full-year net FDI target of $900 million despite remaining pessimist over inflation.

BSP Officer-in-Charge Nicasio Aquino yesterday reported that for August alone, net FDIs hit $400 million or 36.5 percent better than a year ago.

He said the bulk of the new investments went into manufacturing, while real estate and services, including business process outsourcing, logged $46 million and $5.4 million in net flows, respectively.

Investors such Hong Kong and the United States were the biggest sources of investments.

The FDI remained anchored on the country's balance of payments as tabulated by the BSP measuring actual flows that came in during the period as opposed to mere pledges.

FDI flows represent foreign assets in capital and labor-intensive businesses, such as factories.

For the first eight months of the year, investors said net equity capital was up by 47.6 percent to $95.2 million compared with $638 million last year owing to higher equity placements and lower withdrawals.

Interest and the "other capital" component of FDI flows—comprising of intercompany borrowings between local investee companies and their foreign direct investors—likewise contributed to the growth in net FDI flows in the first eight months of the year.

The BSP expects to end the year with at least $900 million in net FDIs, 80 percent better than the $500 million recorded in 2004, despite continuing political uncertainties.

It factored in big ticket investments planned by the private sector in the power and manufacturing sectors as well as mining, following a Supreme Court ruling favoring the entry of foreign investment into the mining sector.

In manufacturing, which accounts for about 75 percent of the country's industrial output, the electronics and food subsectors attracted the biggest foreign investments.

UK bullish on RP prospects

By Ronnel W. Domingo

BOOSTING TRADE REMAINS BULLISH ON THE Philippine economy with the British Embassy reporting the "first ever British-focused trade show in the country" to bolster trade and investment between the two countries.

"We are here to do various business and we are here for the long-term," British Ambassador Peter Beckingham said during the opening day of the three-day fair dubbed The UK Show.

Almost 40 British firms are taking part in the exhibition, which was organized with the help of London-based Standard Chartered Bank, which has been in the country for 120 years.

"The Philippines has much to offer in terms of tourism and openness to foreign investment," Beckingham said. "British companies find (the country) an easy market to operate in, easier than some other markets."

The envoy said there were between 200 and 500 British companies operating here, including big multinationals and small family-run pop operations.

Interviewed on the sidelines of the show, Beckingham said most British firms were setting up with their businesses and "no one were interfered by the political turmoil in the country.

"The United Kingdom has made $17.2 billion in investments in the Philippines over the last 10 years," he said. "We would like to see more opportunities for (British capital) here."

Major UK investments here are concentrated in power, energy, agri-business, transport, water and financial services.

Firms taking part in The UK Show include Asian Terminals Inc., Datelp, HSBC, Marks & Spencer, Speedo, Jaguar, Pru Life UK, Pilipinas Shell, GlaxoSmithKline and The Body Shop.

Beckingham added that the balance of trade between the UK and the Philippines was "promising and has always been in the Philippines' favor."

Data from the embassy's UK Trade and Investment Section show that the UK shipped to the Philippines £116.3 million or about P9.2 billion in 2004.

In the same year, the UK imported from the Philippines £675.2 million worth of local products.

Cebu Pacific cuts plane fares, starts price war

By Clarissa S. Balino

CEBU AIR PACIFIC, THE COUNTRY'S BIGgest budget carrier, is taking its cue from foreign budget carriers and has further cut its plane fares, a move seen triggering a price war in the airline industry.

Dubbed its fares, Cebu Pacific's claimed passengers would realize as much as P1,000 to P2,000 in savings for every leg.

A flight to Cebu from Manila can be as cheap as P999 against the regular fare of P1,998. Manila to Davao will be as low as P999 from P2,569.

Promotional rates are limited, however, and will be available only to those who will book weeks ahead of the flight, as is the style of the low-cost budget carriers.

Cebu Pacific already charges fares at 5-15 percent cheaper than its competitors, but said it was going the route of other low-cost airlines, thus the even lower fares.

The lower fares do not include fuel and its attendant surcharges and the 10 percent value added tax.

Cebu Pacific president Lance Gokongwei said the new airplanes added to its fleet consume 45 percent less fuel.

The savings are passed on to travelers in the form of cheaper tickets.

The company now sees four brand new Airbus planes within an unannounced month.

By the first quarter of 2007, it will have 12 new planes.

Also by next year, the carrier will adopt a similar budget pricing for its international flights, Gokongwei said.

With the new low-cost pricing adopted from no-frills airlines worldwide, the Gokongwei-owned carrier expects at least a 30-percent improvement in its volume and a 20-percent growth in revenue.

This year, the airline expects to carry two million people to different local and overseas destinations and post P9 billion in revenue.

The new pricing scheme is counted on to stimulate demand and create new markets, not just for the company, but for the local airline industry, which is dogged by high fuel costs and increasing prices that affected sale of airline tickets.

"This is all about getting people to think about flying. For those already flying to travel more, and for those who haven't flown to start doing so," said Gokongwei.

InqBox Question of the Week

Your message to the politicians: What will finally bring peace and prosperity to our nation!

Senders of at least 20 texts as published in Tuesday's InqBox will each receive an "Inquirer Shirt"!

Use the inquirer box name/age/city/message. Text your answers to 2337 (Globe) or 220 (Smart). (Maximum of 160 characters)

Some Manila services can call Jane at 8010808 local 330. Provincial services can text Inquirer at inquirer@philippine.inquirer.net or 2337 or 220 so their voices will be heard in Manila.

SILK DENIM

Goulbourn tests the limits of fabric design

This RTW pioneer has been through a lot. Her life is an interesting tapestry

JEANNIE GOULBOURN HAS been through a lot as a designer, businesswoman, mother, indeed as a person. And I've seen her go through a lot.

Daily scrambles after her daughter Natasha's sudden death, eleven and a half years ago, I spent an afternoon doing a cover shoot with her. It was a first, was that, coming to terms with the pain and the loss of her young daughter, one of only two.

Time has different effects on people. Some dam up, others talk incessantly. At that time Jeannie belonged to the latter. Her friends were always there, whatever time of day or night, to listen to her.

That afternoon, I listened to her, spellbound, as she narrated how she had been "in touch" with Natasha, how she felt her presence in places where they had been together and finally on the 40th day after her death—when in Filipino belief system, the dead are said to be moving on from their earthly existence—Jeannie had her final encounter with her daughter right in their home.

She said then that she had been assured by Natasha that the girl was all right and moving on, yet that it wouldn't be the final goodbye between her mother and her. If Natasha had moved on in her journey, I wondered if her best friend would be here, or if she even could. It's not easy to have a child at the peak of her life.

Today, I realize that somehow Jeannie has moved on in her journey, rather bravely and resolutely. In fact, tonight, with her daughter Katrina, she will present the collection they've spun and woven from silk produced in their factories, in "Tapestry," a title most apt to describe Jeannie's journey in her design career and in life. Her life is a tapestry of creations and relationships.

LIFE-STYLED

DivDiver Shweiki Kee Aseen

Have faith

"I think I am healed," Jeannie told me the other night, of her current life phase.

"I think I'm able to embrace life again, able to see it through the eyes of my daughter," she continued. "Then, I had a lot of questions. I felt as if wrestled to the dozen. But a man needs no credit from, even if you have goals, you leave it to God. You live for life and learn to have faith again."

Apart from designing and making strides that won a big trademark for the corporate women under "Ms. J. Goulbourn", Jeannie's gift is reaching out to people and communicating with them. Her compassion

For the past decade or so, Jeannie has been designing and marketing the Filipino silk under the Silk Cocoon brand. She has nearly built a foreign market. For instance, Chanel uses Silk Cocoon in decor in its boutiques. Jeannie also has markets in the US and Europe. In the World Expo '05 she just visited in Nagoya, our award-winning Philippine Pavilion, designed by Ed Calma,

SILK denim jacket and skirt/pants

PROUD parents of the Fire Lovelies: (standing) Eric Marquez and Ricky Gomez, Philip Medalla (guardian of Angela M.) and Mel Bonifacio III; (seated) Nini Marquez and Beth Gomez, Pinky Medalla, Janet Magpantay and Linda Bonifacio

MANILA'S Fire Lovelies 2006: Nina Gomez, Angela Medalla, Christine Mapalo, Erika Marquez and Criselda Bonifacio

BISTRO Group's Tony Nuñez and Lina Bonifacio

New lovelies, great Ilonggo food fest, and new resto

DEDICATED Love 14 Foundation board members: Vilma Nergales Dee, Dennis Bandrac and Helen Ong (from rear) vice president Thereses Santos, director Becko Garcia, 2005 chair Nini Gomez, secretary Nini Valdes, president Mary Pappas and director Charito Camacho

ANTON San Diego, Biking Monolibson-Villanueva and Ramon San Agustin

WHAT'S Dracul Ejicel with Lourdes Jacinto

MANILA Bulletin's Filial Timbancaya Dale Tribunal's Rosy Vergara (standing) food writer Claudia and Main Boss Tarag, Food Magazine managing editor Charina Mijares and guest chef Marital Uppington of Amiga Terrace Hotel in Iloilo

BISTRO Group's Jack Rodriguez

BISTRO Group's Julie Miranda's

WILLIAM Brahm

OUTBACK operating partner Ed de los Reyes, corporate chef John Co-Unjieng, D.G.I. Friday's director for operations Robert Sands and Outback's director for operations Paul Maxwell

I GUESS BY NOW, BALANGGAS, FENTRE ALL aware of the charity-oriented Love 14 Foundation, a very dedicated and well-known charity organization which will present this year's selection of "Manila's Fire Lovelies 2006."

The candidates are young misses possessed of brains, brawn and breeding. Nina Gomez is a 24-year-old graduate of BS Humanities with professional certificate in Management and Master of Science in Management from the University of Asia and the Pacific. She's a senior product executive at Ashley Rhoda and 6040.

Erika Marquez, 22, is an accomplished Int'l Iwrina with the Philippine Sailor. She holds a degree in Bachelor of Science in Commerce, major in Marketing Management from De La Salle University. She's a marketing researcher of Abacc 2000 Corporation.

Criselda Estrella Bonifacio, 20, is a 11 years old resident at De La Salle, taking up BS in Early Childhood Education.

Christine Napoles, 21, is a consultant doing's better of the College of St. Benilde where she's majoring in Consular and Diplomatic Affairs.

And Cristella Kasalle, 22, is a third-year student of Ateneo de Manila University taking up Journalism, minory Studies-Psychology and Communication arts.

On the 17th year of Manila's Fire Lovelies.

As in the past, the foundation hosted a dinner at the popular Bistro Inn at Greenbelt 2, dubbing it "Let the new batch, their parents, and past winners

Seen at the dinner were Love 14 Foundation officers and directors such as Nini Llorente, chair, and Mary Pappas, president.

Cinderella's photo lady Therese Santos, the club's other presidents, and Nini Bonifacio, the foundation secretary, were also present.

Nov. 11 will be the charity grand gala night, at the Royal Ballroom of Makati Shangri-La Hotel, makati

The foundation is super grateful to Bistro Group Chandry and Jimpy Inihong for the cool partnership that has made this must-go event possible, palanggas.

Iloilo feast

At last, one of my favorite cities in the south finally landed in Centro Manila, palanggas, and our taste buds can't to miss the first of-a-kind happening.

There, we discovered loads of excellent, pairing delights from Iloilo. The "Hinkaw Ta!" (in it, let's do!), the Iloilo Fiesta Food, is ongoing until this Sunday Nov. 13, at InterContinental Manila's popular Café Jeremy. The Iloilo goodies are served, buffet style, during lunch and dinner.

Check out the Iloilo Food Festival during lunch, Monday to Sunday, and during dinner, Monday to Saturday. Call 85 39971 for reservations.

New branch

There was barely room for our clothing, new head, some's Restaurant at the ground floor of Bldg. A on Gil Puyat.

When I breezed into the place, I saw the striking murals depicting rural scenery and quaint streets of Iloilo; the nineteen-conditioning

HOTSHOTS of the Bistro Group of Restaurants doing the opening ribbon-snipping. Sergio Linaprieto with Cristina L., Vince Carlos, Mimi Jorge, Italian Ambassador Raudeno Fedele and Rep. Jacinto Paras

CARMEN Nadres and Tina Carlos

SHEILA and Dan Carlos

AT INTERCONTINENTAL Manila's "Hinkaw Ta!" Iloilo Food Festival: (standing) Hotel GM Christian Penaloo, director of public relations Jenny Poza, director of marketing Cornelia Bocarregio and executive assistant manager Francis Concepcion, with guests Ambassador Alberto Lopez, food writer Michaela Fenix and her sister Jocelyn Fenix

Old World charm and taste of the country lanka.

Jessica that evening definitely enjoyed a taste of "la dolce vita" in Italianni's biggest branch as the it's re-awesome 400-seater restaurant with new features like the popular Gelato Corner, and the Panetteria and Café Antilogos.

Another heads of the Bistro Group of restaurants, such as Philippine Waitrose, Tony Nuñez, Mona Carlos, Jack Rodriguez and Armuel Bautista, welcomed their guest of honor, the new Italian ambassador Raudeno Fedele.

Circulating with the delicious palanggas, were back different GMs and managers of Friday's, Italianni's, and their sincere baby (for already popular Fish & Co., the latest member of the Bistro Group.

The hostess couldn't get enough of the "ah-hundred servings" of fish-eating Italian-American dishes and wines, palanggas.

Needless to say, the new Gelato Corner was a masterpiece. Mr. Pin-opened mouthup sampling of almost 20 Italian gelato flavors, made in-house, touch.

As for giveaways, it was the— mmm— fresh-ly baked Ciabatta or Tuscan bread from the Panetteria.

Hey people, next time you want to have a really good Italian-American dining experience, collect for breakfast or anytime of the day, Bistro Italianni's to get in, Alfredo. And yes, it's easy on your wallet, palanggas.

WITHOUT BATTING AN EYELASH

Maurice Arcadio

Photos by Alex Mai Tiagero using Kodak EasyShare C340 digital camera

Wedding fair and launch of one-stop shop set

ELEGANT PARTY VENUE Pat O. Roberts, located at 1439 San Luis cor Victoria Streets, Intramuros, Manila, will hold "Milestone at Pat's: Victoria Bridal Fair" on Nov. 12 and 13. The first 4 Concepts in town of the venue and catering package will double free for recommendations and signature flavors. Pat's Victoria will also launch its One Stop Bridal Shop at the fair. Call 527 0606, 527 0609 or 526 0921, or e-mail patsvictoria@skylinks.com.ph or log on to www.patsvictoria.com.

CONFERENCE. The 5th National Conference on Abbreviation and Natural Medicine, with the theme "The Power of Natural Healing," will be held Nov. 13-15, Hotel International Hotel, Nov. 20-22, Hotel Elfi, and Nov. 29-Dec. 2, Davao. Organized by the Philippine College for the Advancement in Medicines (PCAM) headed by Dr. Dominic Sia Tan, in cooperation with the Philippine Institute for Traditional and Alternative Health Care headed by Jenny Cu Unjieng and the Department of Health. The conference will present the latest status of approaches to healing. Call 5737141 or 4119818.

GOINGS ON

ACTIVITIES. Festival Mama Park and Resort offers arts and crafts lessons this month: Family day fun and activities, Nov. 13, the Insomniac Workshop featuring interesting projects made from domestic materials, Nov. 20; workshop on creating one-of-a-kind artworks from tissue paper, Nov. 27. Festival is at 41 Malakanyang Drive, Malacañang. Call 924-4555.

PERFORMANCE. Chino Park presents "Act 1 opening of the Moon" tonight at 8. Performers include actor/artist Ernesto Ballesteros Jr. and PWU College of Music, Board Rental Galang. Admission is free. "Dance Conversation" on Nov. 12, 6 p.m. Call 3021515.

BAZAAR. Vintage Bazaar at Rockwell Tent, Power Plant Mall is out on Nov. 11 and 13, 10 a.m.-9 p.m.

DEVELOPMENT. A.S. Award-winning consultant Roberto Yuseng Inc. conducts seminars on how organizations can APM. Two seminars on Nov. 8 on environmental planning which features some autism and the environment to increase opportunities for success, vitality and prosperity, on Nov. 15, 8:30 a.m., at the Serendra Meeting Center UP Town, Fairgrounds St., Bonifacio Village, Pasay City. Call 8550008 or text 09 / 0905 920 0908.

SEMINARS. CPS Continental Technology is offering the following seminars: Developing Excellent Business Communication Skills (Nov. 10, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.); Conducting Successful Negotiation (Nov. 17, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.). Call 8921965, 8720968 or 8726801.

DANCE COMPETITION. Robinsons Galleria presents a special contest for Children Little Dance competition on Nov. 12. The competition is set on Nov. 19 coinciding with the sport mode-inspiring contest which will be held at the fountain in front Robinsons Galleria. It is to "Winterize the dance competition with girl Tree Stories in the autumn scenery of Children's title on Nov. 19, 1:30 p.m.

SEMINAR. Ms. Rebecca's Excellency Busan and Christmas Shopping outlines exclusive items at bargain prices on Nov. 26-27, 10 a.m.-8 p.m., at the World Trade Center. The bazaar will feature fashion items and accessories, food items, Christmas décors and novelty items. The event is supported by the SMB Network that Philippine Daily Inquirer, Cebuana, The Freedom Post, Manila Bulletin, Cebuana and Star Time. The event will benefit the projects of The SMB Kapatid, Buklod ng mga Kapatid and Association Missionaries of Assumption Foundations. Call 8870804-5/90.

Goulbourn tests the limits . . .

From page C1

used Silk Cocoon as wall panelling for the huge dome.

While her Silk Cocoon has gained a market for interior design, Acosta has been working hard to make her silk fabrics suited for gowns. It looks like she's finally making a headway in this.

She combines silk with other fabrics naturals, but only abaca—now so make it versatile enough for clothes to "tipuno," you'll see silk combined with even jusi, or woven into gauze. It helps that she has an Italian lover for fabrics and a New York buyer for wedding gown fabrics.

Big news

What should be big news in the show is her silk denim, or silk shirting with abaca, the original originality and originals. She's out to show the wide range of Filipino silk, from the pure salvar silk to sculptured silk stiff enough to combine with jeans. What we also like to see is her silk taffeta she dubs as "taffeta soufflé"—it's glazed, looks like you applied nail polish on it.

In the late Thirties she interview with Rosine Mark, I made it a point to wear a J. Goulbourn Valle red-red embroidery blouse. In the mid-30s of our interview, the Japanese look on Iron—the First Japanese fashion designer to penetrate the French haute couture as chery and make a name in the world—took a pause, gave my cotton blouse one good look and asked where it was made. At that moment, I felt proud to be Filipino and felt proud of Acosta.

Yet she didn't rest content with her signature cut-out embroidery and HOW'wabs.

Invisible zips she told me she couldn't consider herself a real designer until she were her own fabrics or could dictate to a million how she is doing just that—designing fabrics and blends with farm and factory workers. Tonight at Ayala Museum we're seeing her tapestry of fabrics for fashion and the home.

Remember, however, that Acosta's tapestry of life is just as intriguing and interesting, if not more.

'In' party place

Talk about a new "in" place to have a party: It's the area that Lance's race tracks in Carmona, Cavite, where Jeanne had her birthday party a few months back. The venue has attractive possibilities for a high-energy figurative.

At a recent small dinner, we ran into Leo Valdez who's back to town after yet another memorable stint in "Miss Saigon," too—was still flush from a most touching watch he got from Ms. Macintosh and the cast in Nottingham, England, where "Miss Saigon" visited to tour. They stopped him with a post-performance party and stopped where the cast sang number-s just for Leo. He was teary-eyed on the eve of his departure for Manila, recalled Leo who came to our dinner in a black dress—dev life[illegible] stands and...sorry him—love that pizza.

Anna Bayle comeback

We learned that Anna Bayle, the only Filipino supermodel, is planning a comeback in fashion. Anna, who lives in New York, has spent the last decade looking after her son, Callum. The supermodel turned super mom—diligent and fashionless about child care. Now that Callum is a bit grown up, Anna can return to fashion, even on the runway.

Email the author at chelmy.sunjuan@abs.pinoyexchange.com

CHIC! Jacobus with it's translucent in detail and leather skirt

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London calling ... in Manila

Tea, scones or Debenhams?

By Jenni Eguerson

"MIND THE GAP! THAT'S WHAT I told myself as I hurried to the metro carriage out of breath from running. Bank Inconvenient, I made it, whew!

As the doors did close behind me, I finally planted my feet on the floor, and hung on to dear life—my cabs were full and the only thing that kept me from falling like the London bridge was being sandwiched between the belly of a rail. Poor three blobs and the sweaty back of a breast abandoned lady (anyway).

If it were any other city, I would have been annoyed for having myself inside the rush-hour eye. But because there was a promise of a lovely day, I didn't let the scenario ruin my day.

As the Metro sped off to the next station, I closed my eyes and fantasized of high tea, fish and chips, and high street heaven.

After a few minutes of bod's paradise, I felt the train slow down. While my shoulders breathed from the old bag's savior, my heart sank.

I knew I was close to my dream destination, Kensington, maybe Oxford or... "Eleanor Eleanor!" It was my pit stop: Shaw Boulevard station where Shangri-La Mall is.

Yep, I took the most reliable MRT, not the London Underground. I'm thinking it was the numerous billboards along Edsa that blurred my vision and made me see high tea at the illustrious Mrs. Jobby or Gilt and chips served hot off the boat.

But, no, not that type of "chips" & Tang (...is Fish Inks) and fresh with side order of French fries (processed and wrapped in plastic, of course) from McDonald's are as good if not better (at least for my "Pinoy" palates) and no parade to Debenhams for me (my guilty, Colonel Englishpleasure).

British tradition

Do you know? We, Yes, Debenhams has been a household name in the United Kingdom, and it's old but very popular, much like the late Queen Mother.

The company dates back to 1778, but it was not until 1813 that its name first appeared as the partnership of Clark and Debenham in London's Wigmore Street. The business prospered in overseas colonies, and finally opened its first department store in 1906.

Debenhams has undergone major expansions in management up until October 2005 when CVC Capital Partners, Texas Pacific Group, Merrill Lynch Global Private Equity and Management Team acquired it.

Like tea and scones, Debenhams has been part of British tradition from tea consoles of teas, scones and tweeds served in the afternoons to full hunger pangs before dinner's. Debenhams' stylish servings kill the hallows hunger for prime designer clothing. The house offers unique mix of exclusive brands at affordable prices.

Tempting treats

I was chitchatting my inner thighs McCartney that day: a black, sweetened, long-sleeved, button-down shirt, cinched with a white belt, and paired with black leggings. But unlike Stella, I shrugged toward the holy grail of "meanings."

The store glittered with day bulbs and a pretty green-and-red for Christmas tree. My eyes brightened as I hear jam sang (hallelujah!)—it was a serial total of lovely deals in one shot. I sifted through 12 racks of Debenhams' own brands, each one appealing to my fashion palate.

Bad Sewing (second directional clothing), Maine New England (perfect mature enhanced clothing for the fairy), Jasper Conran (a fine range of evening clothes sports and vintage wear for women and girls), J Taylor Tigerlily Gorgeous, Ultimate, and Precious... It's a playtime hall of watering indulgences.

Like a little princess attending her first-ever tea party I gasped in dispository fingers, giddy in emotion, into the basket before me to get a taste of heaven.

Sweet coronation

Originating from affluent folks' invitation to darling friends to have afternoon tea in their homes, the best tea, like Debenhams' house of 10 of the initiative's top shoppers, became an accepted custom among the privileged. Forty-one different brands in collections carried exclusively by the store! Isn't an RSVP needed? For shopping princess is there any better, big-time coffee 12.

So, as though I have not had enough, my sweet tooth for designer creations led me to the court of "Designers at Debenhams." My tummy obsessed and my appetite was regaled by creations from Roy Jasper Conran, Style by Julien MacDonald, Betty Jackson Black, and St. George by Duffer.

I gushed at full servings of fancy embellishments and appliqués from Butterfly by Matthew Williamson (now exclusively at House of Fraser), a splashof luxurious fabric from Nadia John Rocha, and a generous helping of contemporary pieces from the Tibet by Elle 90.

Caught without my usual scrumptious, yet common death sheet (I had lied), my marriage (just 4 x 4 and closed for books), I got lost in a 17,000-sq-ft labyrinth of women's, men's and children's fashions, as well as accessories, lingerie and soft home furnishings.

My arms quickly got filled with a bags of trousers, books, dividers and the sort, and I soon almost don't ask me what it's for, it was pink, furry and sexy—that pretty much says it all).

The cost on my get intoxicated by the things. Much discounts and bountiful wears. It's hard are to imagine you're not in UK... much the things or you I seeing stars from hunger pangs!

Ah, well, it was getting late anyway so I bid my loyal subjects (aka the lonely sales ladies), who were more helpful to me, except for one Hari artist who gave me the evil eye for crumbling the socks boys to soft (what's the harm?).

I inched my way back to the tube, "happy as Larry" (or hungry as hell). It would be high tea time (more of salmon and mustard by then at the Japanese house...tea and scones, or tea and dinner whatever). It's no one to break a traditional bond.

Once again, I graciously queued for the Metro and saw the course between the platform and the metal carriage, but this time, I thought to myself, "Forget the gap ... mind Debenhams!"

E-mail the author at gfashion@inquirer.com.ph.

Photographs Bernard Isaac
Styling Jenni Eguerson Digital Imaging Arvi Lorenzo (0915-3180338)
Models Brenda Gabriela and Borja Mendez
Hair and makeup Joju Bayuga for The Bridal Chalice Debenhams, 2/F, Shangri-La Plaza Mall, Edsa

DRESSING fashion's latest scoop in a banquet of flavored styles. Lower accessories candle over a row or the corsage. Add a pinch of personality with astounding hemp.